the postcard to milwaukee

Prologue

Hey! Why did they take Grandpa away?

I closed my eyes. I felt the wheels slipping over the tracks and gaps.
Was this the same? Was this the same track that brought those German intellectuals, French Jews, Polish communists to Kovna for a discrete shooting?
Was this the EXACT same track that brought Grandpa to Dacheau for a gassing?
My mind did some quick boggling.
Did he prepare a speech for the selector?
Did he shoot totally inappropriate blurtouts to the other condemned?
Did he forget something important?
Did he find the whole situation ridiculous – being destroyed for being an insidious Communist and an international banker simultaneously?
Maybe we be vermin after all?
Maybe, just maybe, the Germans be vermin?
Maybe humanity be vermin.
Maybe vermin has more humanity than we?
Do vermin reduce themselves to cannibalization?

To what degree was he to blame for his own demise? How much was his fate sealed at birth?
How much is the individual responsible for his fate? How much may the authorities be trusted? Should Grandpa have tried to make a run for it? Jump off

the train? Hide? Maybe attack a Gestapo-man so he could be shot by his own doing and die with a sliver of self-esteem.

Maybe there was always that dwindling flicker of hope that kept him obeying.

What an equation, what an equation – a sliver of hope against a sliver of self-esteem!

"Ha! There is my flour supplier Mr. Lopianskis from Krischokaicho Street. We can make some bread together. We'll give away for free – or possibly - cost – keep us going until the Allies save us!

"The Germans probably would laugh at my proposal and at me.

'And where would you bake your bread– in the ovens – you disgusting Jew with a long Jewish nose? We'll put you in the oven with your bread so you may check if it has risen!'

"Probably whip me. Can't they see my age? Can't they see I'm too old for a good whipping – even if I am a Jew?"

Did he hear the same rumble of steel wheels slipping over the same tracks and gaps?

Geding geding gedik dik gedong gedong gedang gedang gedigidong gedigidong gedigidong gedigidong gedigidong gedigidong gedigidong

From the heartless black locomotive, a wail echoed and stretched from Earth to the furthest boundary of heaven.

Owoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo woo woo woo

What are vermin anyway and what do they look like and what do they do?

Can this be - the Jews, for thirty generations, guilty for the death of Jesus? Now, after but one generation, *their* guilt, they shift but one generation back.

Are us remainders, those who have not yet been punished?

Hey! Why did they take Grandpa away?

Did they hurt him?

Chapter one– part one.

My book concerns a three year old little girl; the epitome of innocence I thought. My baker Grandpa; knowledgeable, accountable - was he thus guilty? So guilty that he needed to be condemned to death? Ripped out of existence?

My brain was screaming.

I could not contend with the sights outside – the forests, the forests, those dark fucking forests of hell, the noise from under me, those eyes of my Lithuanian co-travelers, the contemplation of my own thoughts, feelings.

The pain lurking but a few kilometers on.

The octopus of sadness enveloped me – tentacles sliding around me – choking me - squeezing my lungs free of air – its beak drilling deep into my guts – just, just below the rib cage.

Chapter one- part two

During research for a book on the Holocaust I discovered to my horror, that most of my Father's family had been murdered in the *Greuse Aktion* of October 28th 1941- precisely sixty years before, in Kovna, Lithuania.
One day of selection. One day of slaughter.
Two thousand and seven men,
Two thousand and twenty women,
Four thousand two hundred and seventy three children.

I had heard of the *Greuse Aktion* before but never in any detail.

Details of the holocaust had been kept well away from us children, much as pornography would be - hidden in the attic, at the back of some drawer. More than a few times we children had heard the words *Greuse Aktion* whispered among the adults - mourning family whispering what they had lost behind, in the old country. Whispering, that we may not hear.
My research floundered. For months I had lived these two days. I became as obsessive as a moth flying around a burning light. Reading, everything written on that era and area - usually skipping all except those two days.
Listening, searching the faces of survivors, attempting to enter their minds. Minds so defended now by thick walls and parapets.
Mid-October I made the decision to get there for the anniversary. I had to get there for the anniversary. It had become an obsession.
It had become part of me.
Sorrele's daughter had become part of me.
The need of getting the facts right to the millimeter overwhelmed all rational sense. Sorrele was my Father's niece – my cousin. I had been told about her and about her little daughter.

Her daughter so little in forty-one, and events so huge and traumatic that who had time to remember the name of a little girl?
Sorrele's little daughter – how I came to love her. It had become my duty, in her honor, to get the facts correct. As correct as possible. The facts her life and of her murder.

October in Kovna. The biting air, the mist, the sludge, the iced mud.
It had become essential. If I will have to scream it to the world, so shall it be. If all that will be left of my efforts will be a few blotches on some paper, or some magnetic particles on a disk – then so shall it be.

Chapter one part two

Most of those Lithuanian passengers were now staring at me.

I tried closing my eyes and sticking my fingers deep in my ears.
It was too late. The chemical machines in my skull had begun squeezing serotonin all over the place. Even with the all those anti-depressants fighting back

so bravely, tears flowed out and down my long Jewish nose. I struggled again with my breath. The roof of the carriage closed down on me.
Please allow me back and start again. Allow me back to my childhood in Cape Town – and start again.
Did I crave normality? No – I don't think so.
I simply wanted a repeat of life, but slower - slower that I could perhaps grasp what was happening here now and what had happened there then, instead of all this flashing to and fro, to and fro. Flashing…flashing.

Chapter one part three

Bought a brochure on Kovna and found a picture of a new hotel in the Old City. One that was built long after those times. Didn't bargain as instructed. Had a fear of being reported to the Gestapo - and, of course, that absolute and obsessive necessity of being loved by all - especially this obvious "collaborator" hotel manager.
Walked around the old city. No cars, no pollution, all buildings meticulously renovated, well maintained. The streets were clean enough to eat off except where insobriety had played its part too well.
For three dollars I consumed more meat than I had all year in Tel Aviv.
Meat eaters.
Lithuanians proudly eat meat.
In defiance of guilt, Lithuanians eat pig.
So many churches – looks like they really did win after all – no Jews left here – they've all seemed to have been replaced by churches.
Again that overwhelming desire to get back. If not Cape Town then at least Tel Aviv - heimishe Tel Aviv, my shtetel.

Slept like a dog.

Chapter one part five

Nine – thirty - dressed and zapped, I rushed down-stairs for "breakfast till precisely ten hundred hours". I feared a slam of the dining room door on the ten hundredth hour.
Stuffed myself, camel fashion - who could tell when or if, I was to be replenished again.

They called for a cab, which appeared in fifteen seconds. Was I the only foreigner in the city? Apparently. Seems they managed to get rid of all the foreigners as well. Not good for the taxi business. I laughed inwardly. Not good for any business.

"Please - Ninth Fort".

Chapter one part five

Understand, dear reader, at a certain stage Slobotka – the working class Jewish section of Kovna—had changed from being a Ghetto and was declared a Death Camp. Great intellectuals from all over Europe, including Germany, were brought here for an execution – especially if the execution required a certain degree of discretion.
What a warped sense of pride that gave me – this was, after all, *our* death camp and great intellectuals from *all* over Europe were brought all the way here for a killing.
Fort Nine was used to shoot Jews.
Later they were gassed elsewhere with such remarkable efficiency.
Entering the taxi – warmly dressed, over-fed and rested, can you imagine instructing the driver, "Please...the gas chambers!"?

"Certainly – ten minutes"

Chapter one part six

The air, at five degrees Celsius was stifling. My eyes closed - I was being driven to the shul for my Bar Mitzvah. I could not let the congregation down.
I remember the choking. The choking, the sweating, the shaking caught up to me here after all these years.

I knew then I was about to be subjected to the toughest of judgments.

My failure I knew of in advance. I was not ready and knew I would never be and anyway it was far too late. I had to go on. I had to enter that old shul and chant to a God, that had already let me down and anyway I didn't believe in, reading from the Torah, as boys my age had chanted for generations. I had to face the ruins of the First Temple in Jerusalem and chant.
I am convinced that I was the first, after all those millions upon millions of sweet barmitsvah – boys, chanting in 'cracked castratenor' voices, who didn't properly prepare.
To the consternation of all, I totally messed up.
I am sure from that day in my life, not only did I negate the possibility of a God – but God totally stopped believing in me.

Opened the window wider - I let the wind blow full on my face. The musty smell of the old shul enveloped me. Old men with their yellowing prayer shawls – old yellowing prayer books – old torahs donated by some long forgotten family to remember some family member, now long forgotten.

"Krischokaicho Street?" I had memorized the name - repeated over and over by the survivors I had met in Tel Aviv.

He pointed instantly to a narrow street angling off the main one we were on.

"Turn in, turn in, turn in... Grandpa... Dad! Oh God, oh God! Daddy! Daddy."
He understood not one word – but understood everything. My Grandfathers house. The one in which my Dad had been born. The road was once a mainly Jewish, ramshackle, wooden house that had once been part of the ghetto. As the Jews were killed and the ghetto emptied, these houses were given either to the Lithuanians who had lived there before the Germans entered or for "services rendered".

There they were the same houses.
The only Jews about, at the end, about two thousand, hid in a small part closer to the City Center and ultimately required the flame-throwers and the aircraft bombing.

Initially there had been thirty five thousand Jews. Ninety-eight percent of the Jews of Lithuania were murdered. The highest percentage in Europe, I have been told, almost with pride.
Our ghetto seemed so small compared to others. Vilna, the capital, had, for instance, started with one hundred and forty thousand.
The killing rate here, over a year, was one good day in Auschwitz.
My Grandfather's house and bakery were still there – almost unchanged. I noticed the location. On the edge – upwind of Slobotka. Location, location, location, location.
Oy, the smell of his freshly boiled-baked bagels floating slowly over Slobotka, on Sundays. Rows of Jews mostly returned then from the City Center to buy a few hot bagels for the family; and of course, an extra one to eat on the trip home.

I stalked up and down the street, then sauntered one away - to Panervi Street - the main wide street, where Jews had come in and out and never in again.

A few little, over-weight, filthy, irrelevant, soft-capped, Lithuanian, pork-eating men had once left the realm of their insignificant history, insignificant being, just long enough, to smash with crowbars some Jewish skulls – to smash the skulls of my family.
They passed me staring with more hatred than I recalled seeing in the eyes of conquered Lebanese Hezbollah. Did I conquer them by existing?
So vulnerable, I felt, without the point zero-nine machine gun, mounted on a jeep.
With all the strength I could muster, I forced myself to grace them with a dignified stare I generally bestow on the masses, trying hard, mainly in vain, to individualize each one.

They knew that I knew what those eyes had seen.

This is where the Germans had a spot of fun. This was the only wide road leading to the gates where Jews were arbitrarily shot.
Here, where children knew, on the discovery of a smuggled potato, their lives, just beginning, would, in a passing second, be over.

I closed my eyes, my ears. I could smell them. My family. My people. I heard the rifle shots, the close range pistol snap, the barking Germans, the yelping dogs, the whips.

The wail of a Mother having her baby torn from her grasp.
The thud of a crowbar on a Jewish skull.
Shattered,
I choked.
I concentrated on my breathing.
I slipped my hand under my coat feeling for my heart
Checking for the beats.
For
If they stopped, I would die
And be buried,
With my family,
In this cold vile miserable
Place detestable.
In this cold place miserable,
Death and life equally dispensable.

The trombonist had played so well but now the orchestra gone,
all that remained was a jazz quartet.
He knew so well that if he stopped playing, this too would go, so persevering, kept playing.
His hands were old and he couldn't move them as smoothly as before - his lips, slowly cracking...

I threw my body into the back seat.
I was trembling uncontrollably. My hands deep in my pockets, trying to hide from my driver lest he laugh at the frightened clown-Jew.

Schools' caning Afrikaner teachers,
South African Army Nazi sergeants.
Soldiers - corpses on Sinai half-tracks

Gas - Scuds falling on Jews – again
running
hiding,
Children asking.
Just not here – please, just not here!

Desperately trying to focus on something, one thing, anything.
The thoughts, the feelings, the physical stimuli span freely, twisting, entwining, one with the other.

He was a good man, the taxi man.
He understood everything or at least he understood a lot. He waited quietly and when I commanded loudly:
"Take me to the ninth fucking fort," he drove slowly and gently another few minutes and we were there.

He really was a good man - the taxi man.

Chapter one – part four

To the left was a building obviously for the new Administration.

Administering what? Still administrating?
Above that was a copse of Pine Trees. Was that where the one rumored escapee managed to get to?
On top of the beautifully manicured lawned hill – a local Lithuanian fisherman at a lake. A lake with a black soil base linked unhindered, by black soil through to the black soil of the killing field. Did not seem to bother the Lithuanian fisherman; or the fish for that matter.

My brain became an overheated engine fueled by burning thoughts.
I desperately grabbed an arbitrary few for closer examination as they flew in and out of my skull.
I existed through those minutes on an infinite number of plains – each relating to the other. Occasionally, one dominating the other.
Fort nine.
Up the hill towards the Fort of Death.

They had walked from the "small" section of the ghetto towards the fort passed the fence, passing their families.
Some crying softly. Some talking calming rubbish to their children held on hips or held by hands. The wheels of prams, all sizes and shapes squeaking as the mothers pushed and pulled them through the mud. Some groups of men saying Kaddish in unison for themselves knowing the truth and knowing there would be no one to say Kaddish for them tomorrow.
The remainder, the waiting family members - stretching necks, searching for a familiar face - then, after waving, collapse to the ground.
Sobbing, expressing but part of the biting pain tearing at their guts.
Their worlds ending.
Their suns extinguishing.

One Father, huge frame, lunged towards a German guard, each of his eyes wider than the moon, staring non - seeing, emitting the loudest holler.

The hunter was sure that the cage was locked. The white bear safely inside ready for transportation. Without forewarning, the Animal charged, smashing the door open, the hunter let off three shots; the bear fell at his feet. The amount of blood pouring over his white coat, onto the snow, divergent to the smaller and smaller amounts of air being breathed.
The bleeding and breathing simultaneously stopped.
The bear was finally free.
Three shots. Three in the autumn

Somehow they managed the four kilometers to the fort, before the sun had totally risen, through the mist.
I had contemplated sleeping in the ghetto area mirroring that walk and standing naked as they did. I think the pure cold dread of being in that country pushed these plans aside as being just too trivial. How can I identify so intimately with a situation now so far, so far away?
Maybe the last few steps of my family, I was at least obliged to honor. Soon I realized that then there had been no grass - just mud, sludge. I returned to the prepared visitor's concrete path.
I had read and seen so many recordings. I had heard so many witnesses' reports; I knew exactly where the killing field was.
I felt my legs buckle.
A nice American woman caught me. I cried into her shoulder thinking she was a sister Jewess. It turned out, she was normal; simply a normal importer of second hand medical equipment.
I struggled onto the field.
My legs so heavy.
I stood in the center and then, after a few minutes, I pulled out an old siddur, a close friend had given me in Tel Aviv.

Chapter one – part five

Standing in the center of the killing field, this confirmed atheist began the reading of Kaddish. I read aloud, loud so that I could hear the words. I read it slowly, in the old European Ashkenazi pronunciation so *they* could hear it too.

Yeesgadal ve yeeskadash shmey roboh

As I read, it happened. My family started appearing before me. My family began slowly rising up out of the grass field - one hundred meters by fifty. One hundred meters by fifty.

It was only with these words and this style that I could consider relating to Pesele and her husband and her two little brothers – seven and eight. And there was Chedva! And the wife of Herzel - I can't remember her name just now. And little Meir - and Sheine and Yodel and Bella. Oh, I had heard so much about Bella, a bit loose with the men they said. Ha - there was Reise all so fancy so *oiskaputsed.* Mossel and his girl Esthinger and his boy Yankel, the *pazkudnik*, "...what will be of him - he never learns - always playing - what will be of him!"
Haim playing his violin – his fingers literally flew over the strings. Some tried to convince all and sundry that it was but his Father's stern training, denying thus his inherent genius. My God, what a *ferible* that caused!
Osher and all the babies in big fancy prams – here they were, back. They were back!
No, no, the Lithuanians didn't parade the empty, empty prams, squeaking, back passed the ghetto fences for the Fathers to see - of course that didn't happen – it was surely impossible to descend so low into the depths of depravity. Dearth of morality.
Here they were – emerging out the earth- in their prams – pushed gently by their Mothers - all is fine once more - little round faced babies in each– here they are! The babies are back!
The children, the children - they are back!
It was a dream – a bad dream – a nightmare - it did not happen!

Such things do not happen!

I am an absolute non-believer.
My reader – I'm proud non-believer.
Words gushed - ice cold water from the Banias, high up on the Golan Heights, over the rocks, over the rapids and the falls, towards the Sea of Galilee , where it rests temporarily, before hissing, snaking its way through the heat of the Jordan Valley – to the Dead Sea. There to be evaporated by the intense heat of the desert sun. Disappearing as if never having existed ever before. The Red sea so close, so close, yet unable ever to be touched – Moses, never being allowed his entry into the Promised Land.

B 'alma dee v 'rah kherusay v ' yamleekh malkkhusey

B 'chahyehon, uv 'yohmeykhon uv 'chahyei d 'chol beys yisroel

I could feel them jostling as if in the market-place typically arguing among themselves about some point or other. Some economic point. Some Talmudic point or other. Maybe a point about the character of so and so or lack thereof. Their lives - points pointed out – accepted or rejected by the others.
If I had to draw my family then, or for that matter now, it would always be of a bunch of Jews – all shapes and sizes, fingers raised, high in the air – each making a point!
A marketplace of points!
A point so important – it could change the direction of a major international political stream, or a point leading to understanding the intricacies of Bach.

Or maybe a point solving the workings and betrayals of their God.

Ba 'agalah u 'veez 'man kareev, v 'eemru :Amein.

Nothing has changed with us Jews – we are all so determined to make points. Art – academia- politics –physics - theater – mathematics - medicine...points, points, points.
Y 'hey shmei robbah m 'vorach l 'alam u 'lmaya

The Golden Chain. Surrounding the entire Earth and all time.

Back to the cravings and crying in Babylon – and further.

Again tears poured down my Jewish nose, spit frothed uncontrollably out the corners of my mouth and down both sides of my chin as I continued reading. My voice cracking and stammering – as the voice of Moses must have, begging, pleading with God.

Yeesbarakh, v 'yeesh 'sabach, v 'yeespa 'ar, v 'yeesrohmam, v 'yees 'nasei, v 'yees 'hadar, v 'yees 'aleh, v 'yees 'halal shmei d 'kudshah b 'breekh hoo.

As I chanted, more members of my family began pushing their way through this unholy black, black earth. Some stood at the back, others in the front – three over here and one over there and so on and so on.
All staring at me, wearing various expressions; shock, consternation, embarrassment, longing, pain.
To vacate my brain I tried counting but quickly gave up. More and more were appearing from the depths of the killing field. The family extended far further than I thought possibly. Many I recognized from pictures and many from the family coloring and high cheekbones. I am sure many could well have been simply
nochshleppers [i]
coming to see this miraculous convocation. They all looked so serious and so distressed. Can it be that even in death, the family still takes things so seriously? In death, can there not be a little rest for my family?

L'eylah meen kohl beerhatah v'sheeratah, toosh'b'chatah v'nechematah, da'ameeran b'al'mah, v'eemru Amein

I closed the siddur; I knew these words all too well. I have heard sons say them over their Fathers' graves and Fathers say them too, too often over their sons'.

Y'hei shlamah rabbah meen sh'mayah, v'chahyeem aleynu v'al kohl yisrael, ve'emru Amein.

How strange it was? How many tears have been shed for Shakespeare's "Tragedies"? A king here – a princess there – a couple of sibling princes suffocated in their beds.
How dramatic! How sad!
Here ten thousand were slaughtered.
Ten thousand!
On a patch - one hundred by fifty.
Half children.
Remembered?
The Holocaust.

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[i] An uninvited guest

Numbers already doubted.
Names already forgotten.
Still blamed.
Still proclaimed guilty.

Oseh shalom beem'roh'mahv, hoo ya'aseh shalom, aleynu v'al kohl yisrael v'eemru: Amein

Chapter one part six

Finishing the prayer – I lay down on my back, on the grass, in the cold, cold morning of the Kovna October and stared up at the sky, the clouds.

Did this place exist during the wars of Israel when then I searched the skies?

Was this the very same sky they saw, before their eyes closed forever?

Chapter one part seven

I was the spitting image of Tzion - a bit taller maybe. My skin was toned olive – the same as Sorrele's.
"Why did you come now? Why didn't you consider coming before? Where are the others?"
Before I could reply, another member answered on my behalf – each answer giving me greater latitude of forgiveness than the last. Each question being asked before the answer to the previous question was completed. The dissonance getting louder as the questions and answers flowed!
Yes - we are indeed such an excitable people.
I kept trying to open my mouth – but found my finger rose instead. I too had some important points to make but the others' points were apparently even more important.
The seemingly oldest shuffled towards me. I stood up again.
"Has there been any change among the living?
"Do they still shoot and kill for no particular reason?

"Does anyone remember us – does anyone say Kaddish for us?
"What about the food?
"Do you have enough to eat?
"Soup?
"We obviously can't offer you anything – ha – we're dead – and even if we weren't – we would have had little to give".

Someone shouted out from the back,

"Soup – you stupid - live Jews today, they eat gehakter herring[i]

[i] Chopped liver

on kihele[i], they eat chickens from the polka [ii]and of course, the schmaltz[iii].
"The dregs from a barrel of fodder, you want to give him?!"
A gangly adolescent stood erect from his long stupor, as adolescents tend to do, and from within the verbal break, shot off one piercing bullet.
"A tagel [iv]– I want a tagel", then, suddenly becoming aware of his manhood, he attempted to stand to attention – "I really would like a tagel."
Again the family started with the entire range of Jewish gastronomy, the memory of which surely must, I thought, have been long lost before perishing after the period in the Ghetto.
"Gevaldt![v]" said another, "When I heard those religious men saying Kaddish for themselves while walking towards the fort; I thought they were meshugannes at the time, now I understand - maybe they weren't so meshuga."
"I am your Grandfather's brother, Yossele. Time for us stands still and yet we so long for a visit, once in a while, a visit from a survivor. We are all so inquisitive as to what happened to the survivors."
"We weren't survivors, really – my family moved to Africa in twenty – nine as you well know! I was told life was difficult initially but they worked hard and soon owned property – they sent us to a school – we played rugby and cricket. Strict rules. The word of a gentleman, trust, honor and all that."
"Rogby[vi]?? These I don't know – but here you are! Your part of the family that survived. You are survivors of the Shoah. In a hundred or so years – in a few generations all the Jewish families alive will be known as "Survivors."
My eyes and ears were locked into my brain unlike my tongue that rattled loosely.
"It is true. We were different from the goyim[vii]. We were brought up in the pain and the fear of what happened to you. Sometimes we heard a neighbor losing a son in a war, or a motor accident, or worse still being murdered in a drunken brawl, and all the talk was of how that family had to cope with the loss and continue the task of living. Is it possible to realize the relevance of having two thirds of ones family murdered violently, with absolute no mercy or any hope of ever seeing the inside of a court room? Maybe the lack of a decent court room after the events propagated the feeling of the final alienation from mankind."
Of course none of what I had said was heard - another barrage of questions and answers, followed... falling on my head
"Tell me - Mottel – he is doing well? Probably running his country with his intelligence and politics. Lots of ideas – I never understood."
"No – he ran a furniture business and died young. His third born is a Professor in New York. Mottel was my Father".

"A professor!!! New York!! Oy, oy, oy".

Silence covered the family. How strange it was seeing the dead expressing emotion over the living.
Sorrele stepped forward. "May I ask something?"
"Of course, my sweet angel", said my Grandfather's brother – Sorrele's father.
He put his arm around her. She was carrying a doll and a white cloth.

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[i] Biscuit used for eating chopped liver or herring.
[ii] Chicken drum-stick
[iii] Chicken fat
[iv] Bagellish looking object dipped in syrup

For some reason they all loved Sorrele in a very special and deep way.
"This Professor, Shmuel, in New York – is a Doctor?"
"The very best. They come from far and wide to be seen by him.
"He has a clinic"?
"Yes, a very nice one. When I visit New York I always go into his waiting room with wooden wall panels and thick carpets and chat to the patients – I love hearing what they have to say".
She stepped back – head bowed,
"Thank you".

"What made you come -now I wonder?"
"I'm writing a book".
"About us? Sha, sha, sha – about time."
"Well – yes and no. Obviously about our family. But don't forget I was in the South African Army during the worst period of Apartheid and also I served in the Israeli Army both when we were David and when we were Goliath. I'm trying to understand "Universal Morality"!

I felt ridiculous saying those words to my family.

They had been chased, by Lithuanians, after waiting three hours naked, some praying vainly to a God that didn't appear, with their babies and children, shot by the Germans as they were beaten, falling down onto the writhing bodies of dead or dying men, women, screaming children, wailing babies into the prepared pits, or, drowning in blood and gore or, suffocated, being covered over with soil, having other naked Jewish bodies fall on top of them or, beaten to death with steel crowbars or, shot again, if after all that, they somehow managed to crawl pitifully out of their grave.
Universal morality?

They all stared at me.

"Universal Morality. Oish. Oish. God wouldn't dare be caught approaching this field before or after death. What's this "Universal Morality" about?", My Grandfathers brother asked.

"Your brother is a professor – and what are you? Tell me if you may?"

"I'm trying to write a book about..."
"You are a nothing – a gournisht, a potz – disturbing our rest – that's what you are – where did you get the chutzpah to broach such a subject !?"
"I am so sorry, my dear wonderful family", I lifted myself, stood as straight as I could. I noticed now how very short they all were. I raised my voice so all could hear, "but I am desperately trying to isolate, define and comprehend the evil that destroyed you. Maybe this evil exists elsewhere... everywhere? Were those Germans and Lithuanians monsters or were they just another manifestation of man? Is it not my duty, my darlings, after losing you and fighting the wars of Israel ,protecting our tribe, to now isolate that evil, to see where it starts to evolve, and how , by learning to understand it , destroy it for all of humanity and for all time?."

They weren't concentrating.

"You don't go to shul, do you?" someone small, cloth cap covering his eyes, at the back, called out after a poignant moment or two.
Another few dead silent minutes went by. No one was interested in what I had said. It had no relation to their lives or deaths.
"They don't speak Yiddish anymore, do they?" another older man asked, "Hitler, I heard, didn't have time to kill us all off but he did manage to kill our language, almost completely. Someone said that was his only real success. Tell me is it true in Yisroel they are ashamed of Yiddish? They laugh at us and our language?"

"Love and laugh," I said... but wasn't sure. Maybe fear.

Approaching the family now was a bearded man who for some reason I felt, had come just in time to rescue me from these uncalled for altercations.
Oiskaputsed, shiny shoes and a striped suit grey flannel hat, green eyes, high cheekbones and a thick beard. He stood someway back and observed us with a tilted head. One hand, held in a semi-fist had been placed under mouth, with the forefinger between the eye and on the side of the nose, second hand on upper arm of first. He swayed gently forwards and backwards as if praying. Shockeling.
After a short time he approached, opened his arms wide and without bothering to ask, wrapped himself around me.
I felt his warmth – his unqualified love – his unqualified caring.
Grandpa.
He had a sharp, penetrating voice,
"Shut up already, all of you! Quiet, I ask! I wish to have a few words with my Grandchild".
My entire family, or rather those of the family, who were available to meet us, sat down.
The younger with crossed legs on the lawn or lying one hand under their chins chewing blades of grass, the rest on the raised perimeter of the field in every known sitting posture. Some mothers were gently rocking their babies cradled in their arms and some children were running around – as vilde haiers are meant to do. I noticed, also, a few fussy aunts wearing obviously expensive fur coats walking busily, brusquely towards some benches next to the memorial stones, yenting to each other, as women in fur coats tend to do. And there was, of course, Auntie Fanny, who, wearing such a tight corset, had no choice but to lean on one of the memorial stones, sitting having been rendered impossible.
"I am not from here – I was taken to Dacheau. I had been gassed, burnt - my body thrown into lime turned to ashes and spread over a field"
"Yes I heard so – my Father – your son never stopped thinking of you. I remember him so well. He died while I was a child. He was a leftist, a Leninist, a Trotskyite, a atheist – nevertheless they gave him a place of honor in the shul. He used to say Kaddish for you and his Mom.
"When he sat there, I used to hang from his neck while he dovened or looked around at the small community. Often I slipped and I fell onto my back.
"I hated seeing my parents cry – crying was meant only for children – I thought at the time."
At the word "Trotskyite" he covered his eyes with the balls of his hands and muttered "Gevaldt" about ten times
To think that even after their deaths that the Jews were still making points is amazing... is incredible

"Grandpa, they all seem to making points – but hardly believed the points they made, never mind the points made by others. Skepticism surely should have become more realistic than belief".
Totally ignoring any depth of conversation I was trying to reach – he continued,
"There was a rumor in heaven that you were here, so I asked special permission to see you."
My brain was spinning. How much does he know about me; how much should I let on.
"I know the family still thinks of us and cries for us. I know almost every decision of importance is made with us in mind.
"I witnessed my great - grandchildren visiting Dacheau. I couldn't get myself to approach them - but I saw the way they held their Israeli flag. White and blue – like my talit, with a Mogen David. I saw their white knuckles.
" I thought to myself ' How amazing that their thousand years Reich has become our thousand years of pain'"
"Some have tried to escape us out of justifiable fear" I replied, "some of these even have Christmas trees in their houses and relinquished our entire history. But that's ok. I understand the fear. I understand fear. Others have 'universal' ideals – fixing the world through theater. We have scientists and musicians - artists of all kinds creating a nicer world for all to live in."
Suddenly his eyes opened at me,
"So what do you do?"
"I'm a gournisht – but I'm writing a book at the moment." I was attempting a pre-emptive defense.
"My brother Moshe and I came Eretz Israel as volunteers in sixty - seven, the six-day war; I joined the army and participated in three or so wars of my own. At the time we thought that there was going to be another Shoah.
"My brother and I concluded if that was to be, we had to be there. Life would be intolerable if we remained indifferent. We had often promised each other that death would be more tolerable than surviving another Shoah. We were very young then. Also I wasn't doing so good in the university- so I had an opportunity to get out and maintain my self – esteem." (The last part I mumbled almost inaudibly)

"Fortunately our enemies were Arabs so we won the wars."

"You saw war? You saw people die and dead? You have blood on your hands? You felt the insanity of war? "

"Yes Grandpa. I felt. Grandpa we were carrying the gun."

"Guns are treif." His eyes were wide open.

"They sung nice songs, danced, in Israel they sing and dance all the time, and gave us the guns with a smile - and we happily sang and danced and smiled back.
"Anyway, in the mean time, until everybody else starts pulling their flags down – Grandpa – it seems we need a flag as well. Is there an alternative Grandpa – what can the alternative be?"
This last sentence seemed to have relieved my "gournisht" category somewhat – at least from his point of view.
"What does feel like as a Jew holding a gun in a Jewish country?"
"Ambivalent."

"Do you Grandpa? Do you know what it's like patrolling a refugee camp, not much different, not all that different in looks than Slobotka. All that fear in the eyes of children and mothers?
"It has been said that a Jew regarding himself 'One of the Chosen' in the shadow of a Church, during periods of denigration is a mitzvah.
"It has been said the same Jew regarding himself "One of the Chosen", gun in hand, in a Palestinian refugee camp - is absolute evil."

He thought a few moments.

"I see you are indeed part of the family. My grandson – let me tell you though - its far better having you patrol the refugee camp in Yisroel than have Germans patrol Slobotka."
"Why do you say that?"
He tilted his head, "We were in Slobotka."
Can he be so selfish that he wishes his family and himself to live?
The equation I am left with seems to be - the degree of my Jewishness related to the degree of my universality.

I look at the field.

I realize that the savages who created this never considered equations. Our universality was never considered.
"We live in a world of savages and nothing has changed. We too have to act as savages – as gentle as savages can be – but savages. Just for the time being until sanity starts its reign on Earth. Sometimes I hear people say we aren't very nice – so many grumpy Jews walk this earth – ha – I'm surprised there are so many nice ones of us around at all! "
A long gap followed - his forehead wrinkled. It was apparently important for him to get it all out and get it out quickly.
Oh, how I knew those forehead wrinkles so well...Daddy, Daddy - where are you?
"We were the most cosmopolitan people in the world. How wonderful it was to meet a Jew from Holland and have a discussion about Maimodes in Yiddish. Or Rumania. How incredible was it to hear about the Jews from Greece or India originating from the Roman conquest. Or the Sephardim thrown out of Spain speaking Ladino as we Yiddish – but singing with the same soul and praying the same prayers and having rabbinical discussions and decisions transmitted to us and ours to them. Traveling to discover America with Columbus – his diary written in Hebrew! Ha – we were nine hundred years in Lithuania but still felt close to our brothers in India. (Even the Polish Jews we tolerated to some degree - a bit less those from Galitsia. A Yekke, of course, will forever remain a Yekke). Wherever in history physical strength determined life - we lost. I never believed in it before but maybe the Zionists were right after all. Abraham smashed the idols – but the degree of our suffering has been so great this time, that maybe we should raise a flag and salute all that it entails. Maybe we need a few idols for the time being. Only as instruments, mind you, for survival in the meantime. To be a bissele meshuga in a world of meshugannes! Maybe we should also build tanks and mines and planes and ships and teach our children to crawl in the dust and thorns and jump fearlessly out of airplanes and have military bands playing stirring music in front of columns of smart soldiers and erect walls around us thick and high and . . "

"Grandfather!" I almost shouted trying to get his tirade to slow down.

"The flag is raised– the country is there – and I'm with them as much as I would have been with you. The tanks, the planes - they are there! They carry a Mogen Dovid! I've seen our kids running into fire, begging to be taken into what had seemed a lost battle. Returning, lying - dying – bleeding - shot deer in a hunter's wooden cart. Soon to be made into trophies.

"My son's commando team ran through bullets, fearlessly – as if they were water. My son saw his Lieutenants corpse, his first thoughts were of anger. Anger that he had destroyed his parents"

Never in life had he displayed weakness - never. I could just see the tears welling up in the old mans eyes, his lower lip held tight above the upper.

"Grandfather, we are using our children as bricks in the wall. The flag is there. Grandfather I saw the hanging twisted legs and they were wearing my boots. The flag is there but often I dream of the time we should take it down and burn it"

He did not understand the words but felt my burning tongue.

"Because of you, and others like you all the world over, I now understand, it should the last to come down. The very, very last. When it is time I will be the first take it down my courageous, beautiful flag, my sweet old Grandfather – kiss it like the religious kiss the Holy Torah, then burn it and sprinkle its ashes over the same field they have done yours. But the time has not yet arrived and I sob like a baby when I see it sometimes a bit torn, still alive flapping bravely, desperately, in the same winds you once felt. "

"I used to have the idea of "Or Le Goyim". I used to believe that we could develop a perfect country. I used to believe that through our Zionist Socialist Society, we could develop an example, to be followed by the whole world.

"Oy Vey - I can see you are tsutumlt!" He looking at me and started swaying left to right.

"My dear grandson –a generation ago I was shoved into a gas chamber with women, girls and children thrown on top. Our bodies burned, gold pulled from our teeth.

"The world now argues about the numbers - too high, too low! Film makers, I believe, make millions. Any reason for our existence long forgotten. But even with incredible punishment, then and now, we are still hated. What is there to do? What is there to do? I hear your solution – is there an alternative?

"No".

I stood next to him my arms tightly around him and whispered into his ear. He winced.

"My son - the Commando – he is so tough. When I hold him I feel his body made of steel, when I hold him I feel his heart pumping the warmest, truest blood. If he had been with you, Grandfather, in Slobotka, with a broken branch, he would have smashed those German heads into pulp and until they all ran back to the Rhine. They would all have run back so fast. I would have had you holding me at birth and through the battles I endured and the wars that still grip my brain, twist it and on release, collapse into a tired pile by a corner in my cranium."

Looking up I was surprised to see that the whole family had gone back under.

"If we weren't so degraded, Grandfather, if we weren't destroyed as vermin

"Grandfather... "
It was then I noticed, on the nicely kept lawn, just behind him, to the left, a wrinkled faced tough-looking little old lady. She was dressed in black with a string of white pearls around her neck and a cloth over her bowed head. Maybe it was because I was so deep in conversation that I hadn't notice her before, maybe it was the backdrop of the family that had hid her, maybe she had been hidden by the mist, still dancing on the ice cold lawn. She was nodding quietly, taking in all the points to be discussed later in the kitchen at the back of their house next to the stove. Discussions that had taken place in short phrases, expressing long understood meanings – a style of interlocution held only by couples during the course of eternal love.
Now not only did I notice her but also I noticed her sad eyes. The oven that had baked thousands upon thousands of bagels was extinguished, her apron folded and the house occupied by five families pushed back here from the center of town. She put out her hands as my Grandfather had – maybe to hold me, maybe to hold him. Spinning around she walked briskly away quickly disappearing, to the family, under the green.
I was alone with my Grandpa. He too started turning.
"Don't be so melodramatic – just be a mensch."
I think the pain of those years of degradation hurt him more than the cruelty of his death. I think he was running now, not from me – but the memory of that, that I had rekindled.
With the pleading call of the Shofar, out of the ground appeared a group of translucent Kleizmer Musicians.

He started walking, fading slowly. He stopped – span around.
"... and the next time you come to visit your dead relatives don't dress like a shlump. Get yourself a suit and tie in the very least... "

"A Shofar – musicians – so who's being melodramatic!"
He started walking southwards stopped looked around and up, then began walking westward. It was then I noticed his brown hat, grayish blue suit with buttons lacking and those that were there - in the wrong button-holes! The back of his pants splattered with baking flour and dough!
With more than a trace of emotion, I shouted after him, at the top of my voice. The nearby Lithuanian village could already be seen through him.
"Did you prepare a speech for the *selector* while on the cattle train to Dacheau and by doing so irritate everybody in your carriage? Were you making totally inappropriate jokes and comments? Uncontrolled blurtouts maybe? Did you make a fool of yourself? Grandpa! Wait! Tell me!!"
Continuing his walk – he turned his face to the side, left eyebrow up and right eyelid down.

"Nu?"

"I don't love you, Grandpa – I adore you – I love and adore you!"

chapter one part nine

I watched a girl walk a dog walk her dog on the outer perimeter of the killing

Shouted at her to get the fuck out.
She answered with a flap.
She lived in the village just below.
Must have seen dozens of the Jews crying.
As her forbears had seen thousands dying.

I did a flap in return and discovered forty seventy dollar Nikken camera I had bought at Ben Gurion airport was gone – probably fell out in the taxi. Pity about the pictures of the peasants in the train. What the hell. Maybe it's in the overnight bag – it wasn't.

In my back left side of my jeans a card advertising a whore in Prague.

"Hey – how did that get there?"

It was freezing cold – and for the first time in my life didn't notice that I was hungry.

A flock of birds, a huge flock – it indeed could have been nine thousand five hundred, flew over me, circled a few times then flew south. There was no way of counting that quickly..

Chapter one part ten

I live in a little penthouse in the middle of Tel Aviv. In the fall, at exactly three I have a break from this writing with a good mug of coffee, a flock of birds fly around my building. I'm not an ornithologist. If can get some information about migrating birds, before finishing this book, I'll certainly let you know where they are from.

Three o'clock. Three.

In the fall.

A child is sitting with his class – second grade – paper-work with glue. Fails complying with instructions so tries, again unsuccessfully, his own original solution. Looks up to discover class gone.. The glue spreading everywhere.

Panic.

I don't believe in God.

I don't even believe in belief.

I slowly read Kaddish again, this time in the accent I know. Surely any Israeli tourist would read kaddish here. I wished to revert to being just a simple Israeli tourist without any particular claims to this field.

I would love to end the story here

Nine thousand five hundred destroyed Jews turning into nine thousand five hundred beautiful birds. What an equation!

It would be perfect but my stories, unfortunately, never end perfectly.

Chapter two – part one

To my surprise my first cleaning lady I employed , after a thirty year attempt at marital life and moving into my own apartment, was a Russian Seventh Day Adventist. As far as I understood, her belief was based on the days of the week. I definitely would not or could not be able to join her beliefs on this basis. I never ever remember which day it was.

Fortunately, neither of us spoke the language of the other. She was happy working in Israel and for me, for the equivalent of a million or so rubles a day and of course, the possibility of not having to defile the Sabbath. I too was happy with her work. I am positive that if it was not for the black hairy mole above her lip, below her left nostril, she would be still with me.

I was relieved that I never had to divulge to her that I had invented an eighth day. This surely would have shot her ordered life into pieces.
An eighth day - I call "Nonday." It slips smoothly between Wednesday and Thursday.

At midnight

Non-day is so thin that a state-of-the-art electron microscope could not find it. If it could be seen it wouldn't, of course, then be called " Nonday" but something else. If I were to design junior school curriculums I would have little kids call out Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, NONDAY, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Nonday is there but it is so thin – it is n'th times thinner than the sharpest razor.

I have often used the thickness of Nonday to illustrate the depth of belief.
One either has the ability to balance on this, or through predisposition or possibly the lack of skill, walk around it, lost, constantly considering which way to go next.
So many fall off that I often wonder what makes them try again and again and again. Isn't it time to throw in the towel? Why not just relax and enjoy what their miserable lives has to offer?

Their need for belief, I imagine, must indeed be immense.

I find myself wondering around in every direction, using Nonday as a sort of compass. My inherent talent to conjure up new ideas without the help of anything or anyone is not the result of any specific challenge ...but more the result of not finding Nonday available when and as required.

I am the absolute non-believer. I don't even believe in non-believing. Everything is a mish mash and a jungle.

Walking around utterly lost usually forces my blood pressure to rise, my mouth to dry, my guts to churn like cement mixer, my hands to shake. How jealous I am of those who do believe. How I would love to use phrases like: "I believe but..." or "I almost believe that but..." or "This which is similar to that..." I can't allow myself even that amount of belief. All my sentences come out starting with a "probably, possibly, presumably, assumingly, seemingly, reasonably". I get stuck.

Many times, being entangled, in all the probabilities and possibilities, I rest huffing - peering jealously backwards towards my smiling, singing, aging, Russian Seventh Day Adventist cleaning lady - dancing daintily on her razor edge of belief. Both in front of her and behind fellow Adventists performing the same dance in unison; the same dance of absolute certainty, pointed feet shooting high. The 'Can – Can' of belief! .

In the mean time getting further and further enmeshed, I fall into the depths of distress – a lone fish encircled by hungry mouth-snapping sharks. The only way to survival is exploring hopefully finding some advantage of being off the Nonday edge. How strangely more difficult it is to maintain one's balance in the vast unknown of all possibilities than on the razor edge of belief!

Whereas, for instance, the believer is committed to a heaven being a nice and ordered place with the word "eternity" thrown around casually. A huge golden door with angels dressed in starched-ironed white natural, environmentally friendly, cotton smocks, diamond studded halos, checking and studying lists and lists of sins and good deeds of freshly arrived Clients, lining up quietly, obediently waiting their fate. Being sent finally "up" or alas "down" after final judgment is passed.

Could I possibly adopt such a believer's perception of heaven?

No, no, no. Never, never, never! Not at all.

I can assure you that heaven for me would be more like a Middle Eastern Souk. Hundreds, thousands of new Clients coming up, sometimes individually, sometimes in groups and sometimes layer after layer after layer. Some, losing their way, passing heaven completely, finding themselves almost back to Life - having to be dragged, yanked urgently or guided gently, back into the right direction by one or more of the heavenly staff.

All in a state of shock, of course, being in the expected, nevertheless surprising, condition of death.

And always, of course, always prematurely.

Chapter two part two

Of all the various types of Clients that arrive in my heaven, the "Building Contractors" were the only ones who almost on arrival were seen to be moving about with a huge smile and repeating over and over to themselves,

"This is really heaven. Ah, this is heaven!"

They were, often as not, met on arrival by one of the senior Glerks or even the Chief Glerk. The Chief Glerk had a terrible stutter, a limp, and tic on his right eye.
"B-b-b-build!" he would command.
"What must we build?" they would ask.
"One of th-th-those", pointing at the billions of structures around. I discovered they were called *Constraintures*.
Being what I am, I immediately realized this was a combination of *constraint* and *structure*.
Being what I am, I decided to keep this fact to myself - I was, after all, just a visitor and I certainly did not wish to upset all these Clients who started to imagine that in death, they had finally been released from their shackles.
Not wishing to tempt fate the Contractors almost always immediately agreed, however when asked about architects, engineers, plans so on and so forth - the Glerk's eyes would mist over and he would spit out.

"B-b-build l-l-like you s-s-see".

He would then quickly grump off to some other pressing task before anyone could start mocking his various impediments.
Whatever else you would wish to say about my heaven you would have to admit the colors are phenomenal. For some reason where the sky should be, it was a bright light purple and where the earth should be, it was a darker purple.

Except, of course, where this was, for no understandable reason, reversed.

The Constraintures - a thousand colors one adjacent to, or overlapping, the next. Snotty-green, Suffocating-blue, Nappy-yellow, Boxing-red, Chemo-therapy beige, Make-it- through-traffic-light-orange pastels. Apartheid-brown mud, and so on, always sliding down to where it was least expected to be.
Almost always, on the point of arrival, the designers or connoisseurs of taste or others blessed with "finesse" began a raucous squabble. They never seemed to agree with one another - perhaps on principle - much, I assumed, as they did during their Life period.
Inwardly I laughed thinking of all those little boys and girls saying the Lord's Prayer - asking for "Peace as there was in Heaven..." The incessant arguments, shouts, debates, bargaining and arguing of the Clients as loud as they were, were absorbed by the vastness of the place.
I have a sneaky feeling that the Lord, realized that a huge portion of Clients were undoubtedly suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

In all his genius he had removed all other sounds.

No ambulances, bomb alert sirens, police cars, fire engines, explosions, tank fire, computer games, machine guns, Japanese motor-cycles, rock music, crashing

missiles, jets, ships horns and whatever. All of which would have definitely created extreme discomfort - especially among His Chosen from Tel Aviv.
.The Contractors searched the huge circular structures stretching up high, at least far as they could see and a bit further. No windows, no balconies, no parapets. Nothing but one door at the base.
Adjacent to the completed structures there were, more often than not, crowds of Clients, jostling, shouting to get ahead to enter the door, complaining at some other Client who had jumped queue or raising their hands - empty or with some document or other to present.
A Doorangel, sweating and throwing inappropriate curses, trying to keep order while, at the same time, trying desperately to fulfill his allotted task.
Quite often, even stranger than these goings-on was the group of Observatrators on the outside, on the opposite side of the door, pushing the whole structure in some direction or other, complying with the orders of some Glerk or other and often resulting in mobs of the impatient waiting Clients, to fall, uncontrollably over each other.
I realized, contrary to my initial summation, that moving these huge structures around was not a miracle. In heaven there was, after all, no gravity, no air resistance and no friction with earth.
Examining the Constrainers being built they saw that within the first circle was a second concentric wall, then another and another.
Sometimes one or two, sometimes twenty or so walls - sometimes a hundred if not more.
Each with just one door.
Each with just one Doorangel. They reminded me of the concierge at the entrance to a fancy shmantsy restaurant, or a Russian immigrant anti terrorist guard, or ticket collectors at a opera, or a bouncer outside a London disco. Each type according to need. In the main nice and mannerly according to need.
For the Contractors the true feeling of heaven became apparent when they discovered there were no plans, no engineers. In fact there were no building regulations, no municipal or regional licensing nor corrupt inspectors, no maximum height, no water pipes, no sewerage facilities, no building lines or restrictions, no base, no infrastructure. And no political cronies of various persuasions. No taxes whatsoever; unlike in Life when about fifteen hungry tax officials start circling ones project for the a range of taxes that are needed to be paid in advance of any possible profits.
Best of all no crazy architects - each structure was copied from the last - with each worker eyeing a completed one and doing his best. No unions. The building workers arrived from every corner of the world and put to work, without the need for payment or rest - ever.
Building material was supplied of the type that each was skilled in using and from what ever geographic region they had arrived. Mud, bricks stones, steel, plastic, glass, grass, palm branches and so on.
Sometimes a wall or two would collapse but generally, as there was no cash-flow, or schedule, no one seemed to care or complained.
The final product lacking the influence of any school of design was - how may I put it - "Interesting" or maybe "Purpose Fulfilling". The mud was always wet and dripping and cracks constantly appeared.
No one ever complained and if there was ever a complaint there was no one to complain to.

I would like remind you that unlike Life; where we enter and leave and hysterically structure the two points and mourn every lost period, where we struggle to extend the leaving point, in heaven there is only an entry point. In life the watchword we hear over and over is 'patience, patience, patience' in heaven impatience just cannot exist!
The workers could be seen not only building new structures but also busy on even the very oldest - climbing slipping and climbing again to rebuild a wall or block some crack or other. Sometimes they could be seen rushing in huge teams, at the behest of the Chief Glerk, through various doors to get to some internal wall that needed urgent repair before Clients slipped through into an area not intended for them.

The Contractor Clients were ecstatic.

They repeated over and over to themselves that had they known of what was to be, they would have come sooner.
I personally have known quite a few that I would have loved to have fulfilled their wishes and helped them on their way.

Chapter two Part three

It would be easiest to illustrate the workings of heaven through the Animal Constraintures. Their relative simplicity of life and social structure allows for a clearer understanding – we are after all just complex Animals – aren't we?

In Animal heaven we have Constraintures - one per specie.

Obviously in Animal heaven the doors are attached to the walls by double spring hinges - easily opened by a shove of the Animal's nose. If on the rare occasion where an Animal is not permitted through a door, the Doorangel simply holds the door closed manually.

Where size or weight makes this problematical, a wooden beam is slammed down, usually such a clatter that Animals arriving would back away momentarily.

There isn't really much checking to do as they enter. It is more of a record that has to be taken. Record-keeping is an integral activity throughout heaven although, with the vast quantity of work, they are usually disgustingly inaccurate. It is very important however, that all species behave in the pre-determined behavior pattern.

There are cases of individual birds, for instance, while migrating, getting totally lost thus finding themselves very soon at the door for birds. No entry permitted.

A lion, disregarding the lioness lying four meters from him may have had the audacity to attack a hunter. Straight to the Lion Constrainture. Trying to nose or paw the door open. No entry permitted

Occasionally these individualists are permitted to get through the first wall but had no way of convincing the Doorangel at the second door or following doors, of their true Group Association.

A Doorangel guards the door on each concentric circle checking every client before allowing him to enter. Each Client has to pass through as many doors as he can.

Each level represents the DEGREE of belonging. The subject Client eventually arriving at the Degree level he will be spending his eternity. Spending eternity of course, with similar members of his category.

After all this continual filtering some reach the very center of its category. The souls here are of such incredible belonging, that they melt into a ball of bright, white, gooey, glowing ball of wobbly plasma. Hardly even a thought would enter the mind of one without the same thought entering the minds of all.

There was never any assurance that they would ever get to the center. Warm and comfortable; where no further questions can be asked of any soul nor does a soul have any further questions to ask. All questions had been asked and anyway there was no one to ask who knew more than the asker.

Nothing left recognizable of them left as separate beings.

They had transformed into a ball of bright, white, gooey, glowing ball of wobbly plasma.

Which had no mouth, nor words to express anyway.

It follows obviously, the more complex the species the more walls they have to go through.

Sheep, cows, camels have few walls, in fact maybe just one or two. Dogs and cats on the other hand have quite a bit more than that. Nearly all go straight to the center and turned immediately into a ball of bright, white, gooey, glowing ball of wobbly plasma.

My Siamese cat, Jessica, loved to rest in the shadow of car undersides. To this day is, I was told, still negotiating the entry towards the center somewhere around the seventh door.

This particular cat, being almost totally deaf, had not noticed the car's engine starting.

Her negotiating skills even sharpened further long before her arrival at heaven's doors; a good part of her life having been spent negotiating in the shadow of the fridge.

The cat repeating over and over that the means of her death made her the most typical of cats but to no avail.

The means of death has very little to do with categorization.

I must tell you now that there ARE Animal angels. They are white, they do wear wings on their back and are very, very kind. I shall leave the full description of Animal angels to the reader's imagination. As well as I can describe them nothing can be better than your graphic imagination.

Chapter two part three

There were diseased old Clients and tough young Clients. Murdered Clients and Clients who had killed themselves, feeling the state of non-existence to be preferable to the state of existence. Women beaten by their husbands. Many husbands died having been badgered by their wives. Some had died by not having enough to eat. Some had died by eating too much. Soldiers coming up singly or occasionally in packs.

One soon noticed that, notwithstanding the horrors of war, the actual number didn't actually add up to a very large quantity, taking all other arriving Clients into account.

From Gods point of view war was just another human disease, running rampant now and then.

Not only is there a huge helter-skelter searching for the appropriate door but there is also a continual wrangling with the Glerks involved.

Each one had something to say for himself. Each one, of course, had spent a gloriously righteous life.

From their point of view, all the evil in the world was definitely some one else's doing.

It took some time for them to realize that it was not "evil" nor "righteousness" that was being searched for here.

The pushing, pulling, the desperate shoving - all trying to get to one of the doors leading through to the center where selected Clients would transform into balls of bright, white, gooey, glowing wobbly plasma.

. It was only within that ball of bright, white, gooey, glowing wobbly plasma that discussion and differences stopped. At the core each member always totally satisfied and in absolute union with his fellow members

One small item I noticed which the reader may regard as a derisive observation. In the three last three, or so, rings the potential blobs are suddenly overcome with total relaxation and greatly increased mutual agreement. During these few stages before the last, I was amused at seeing the way each member began, in unison, a constant nodding, bobbing of their heads.

Each already agreeing with each others point of view. By the stage there seemed to be but one point of view.

The very inner walls retained their rough construction but had been transformed, miraculously, into having a smooth soft off-white translucent surface, emitting a quiet soothing glow.
The closer one approached the center most beautiful spiritual music was heard. Very soft initially, but about five stages from the center, getting slowly louder and clearer but still gentle as the center is approached. Members of the heavenly staff call this "Categorical Music".

The various categories have no relationship whatsoever to the groups or categories used on Earth – nations, races, peoples, so on and so forth.

One could see a German, for instance, soldier waiting in line, at the same door, beside an English soldier. Only minutes before they had simultaneously killed each other. Maybe a South American Indian warrior, whose last battle with an alligator, unfortunately, wasn't all that successful.

The smallest yet most luxurious and exclusive part of the whole entire system of the Constrainture section was the "Warrior Category". Very few Clients were even allowed to approach this area . The very few of those that did and were finally accepted, very seldom got through the first few circles.
As a result of this extreme filtering and re-filtering process the ball of bright, white, gooey, glowing wobbly plasma was tiny. Notwithstanding this, the warmth and light radiating, pulsating from here was so great that its waves reached the very outer boundaries of heaven, and the entire circumference of earth, creating a subliminal effect on those up there as well as down here.

I feel obligated to give a few examples of the warrior class that were given to me. Some of their stories are known in part by members of the staff but more often than not, God alone is aware of them.
Indeed part of their greatness is the very fact that they never in life nor in death did they regard their attributes as anything exceptional. Had they been revealed their own greatness they would see absolute no purpose in having themselves known as any different, separate or superior to or from others.
As soldiers they would be the ones charging in front of their own, concerned only with the safety of those at home or those under their command. In Israel we read about these types occasionally. Jaws falling, we wonder if we could fall on the grenade, if we could run through a machine gun blast to save some kid captured kid or run towards a suicide bomber. Who are these people? Who?
Or a totally paralyzed student of law.
Or an unstable mind deciding to pick up a pen.

Or an outsider flower-child –floating around the world – no boundary, no border – until time came for children of her own, creating for them the security and love she was never taught.

Who are these Clients? Who?

Who are these Clients who had against all odds decided that they will not *try* to get to a goal – but *will* get to that goal whatever – obstacles merely making the task just that more interesting.

The sayeret matkal of heaven

God of course always was seen rushing between negotiations haggling and bickering – trying to make some sort of order. He had his over -weight Police-angels, but these he used only as a final resort and very seldom at that. Let's not forget that time is not a factor in heaven. Some negotiations can go on almost indefinitely – which in other heavens, I imagine, could be regarded in itself a type of penitence. In my heaven was perfectly acceptable.

A major problem was that no Clients had understood what to expect on their arrival here.

Most had been completely confused by priests, rabbis and so on while living their lives on Earth. Even more amazing was all those beliefs, mentioned before, were one form of categorization. Very seldom could a Client prove that he lived by his belief.

Christians killed Christians who crossed themselves in different ways, never minded the other nine commandments.

Moslems killed but didn't cross themselves.

And many, many Jews ate sandwiches on Yom Kippur.

It doesn't matter.

Belief it turns out is just one further aspect of categorization, and not a particularly important one at that, maybe tying one to a certain category or other.

Chapter two part three

For you, my reader, I would like to relate an interesting point not of direct relevance to my book but should be immensely pleasing.
The Client takes the form of not what they were but what they had imagined themselves to be.
It's what one of the Glerks called the "cherry on the top" of transfer, or as another put it, the desert, the crepe suzette.
Those women we see prancing about, wearing undersized clothes, bellies flashing, thinking of themselves as perfectly formed – are now perfectly formed.

Those dumb-wits who thought of themselves as brilliant – are now brilliant.

Unfortunately it works the opposite way as well. However most regard themselves better than they really are and thus most are very satisfied with the arrangement.

God has a wonderful heart.

There were of course, cases, like the chief Glerk who on earth notwithstanding his incredible intelligence and administrative ability never got very far. No one ever had the patience to wait for him to complete a sentence and so many burst into laughter - hearing the stammer. Immediately on arrival the kind Lord posted him to the prestigious position he had kept open especially for him. Although God had done this with the best of intentions – for the Chief Glerk heaven had been hell from the first instant.
He often wished to tell God of his craving to disappear deep into some Constrainture or other – but could never get the words out.

Chapter two part four

If you are at the stage in life, when, after reading this still wonder what will be with you - and there is little left you can do – relax and observe your destiny unfold.

Morality is the key.

Morality should be your beckoning

It the definition of morality that gives most of us a "head-ache". What we need is a true sharper definition of morality. One created by observation, crystal clear objective observation.

Imagine a fat cat capitalist walking down Wall street, cigar in hand dressed in a three piece pin-striped suit. Now imagine him giving a huge donation to the Steel Union or something worse. Is he moral? As a capitalist he is immoral and scorned. To the down-trodden worker he is a saint.

A Gestapo – man, Schmidt, smuggling a little food to a few Jews- is he a good man or evil? To us Jews he is a saint but the one Gestapo I heard of, who did this, was shot immediately when caught by his friends.

Moral people are certainly not shot! We certainly don't shoot people who are moral! He was to his friends immoral, to the point of requiring an execution - a punishment generally used for capital crimes.

Thus obviously the rules, religion, laws and all those strictures we face on earth has little to do with morality. These are around to simply keep the individual under control within a group he finds himself within, whether he belongs to it or not.

Sometimes the group is so large the individual's feeling of belonging or even the chance of belonging does not exist and those strictures are even more required for its existence. Where the feeling of belonging is particularly strong the strictures are seldom or never in need of use.

I've noticed that the more one belongs the less one has to be concerned about original thought, fear of wrong choices, feeling of loneliness as well as gut ripping depression. I've noticed that a great fear appears when members of the group meet other groups.

The only greater fear than this is where the different character comes from the same group.

I've notice also that the greater the belonging or need to belong, the greater the fear and reaction required to alleviate that fear.

Thus heaven was constructed of a multitude of doors and at each one a Glerk would check the Client as to his belonging of to the beyond. Example a Greek who loved football and had performed all the correct "rites of football" would be permitted through the football door as would an Argentinean or one of those crazy Brits. If both the Buddhist and the Catholic both performed religious "rites" they would both, again go through the same Religious Rites door. At each stage the Glerks questioned them. The Glerks would carefully observe each Client, checking carefully his history and listening to his every word. It is essential that no individual upset any group being formed in the hereafter or it is called up there, maybe more correctly – at the doors to the "after here".

After entering the right doors the Client eventually reaches his final resting-place and is absorbed into a huge ball of wobbly plasma. Total union with his kind. Total rest and peace. Total timeless molding.

If one was a God, and one stepped back a second or two, there was indeed a kind of beauty in seeing all these Clients pushing or pushing themselves through door after door barrier after barrier backwards and forwards, after each door, within each space being approached by the same staff as the one left in the space before. Often there was a dispute between Glerks or the chief Glerks at each point with the various other staff members brought in to arbitrate. Sometimes in very difficult circumstances even God was brought through to help sort things out – maybe arbitrate in disputes between the Glerks and the Clients. God was in fact the only member of the heavenly staff permitted through from beginning to end and the until finally molding into the blob they probably initiated from.

And why not – wasn't he the creator? Between you and me, considering the amount of work in arbitration alone, there may indeed be a number of Gods around, taking turns, leaving time for creation and so on and so forth.

Reader, please excuse my limited knowledge of what exactly occurs, I am, like yourself, after all, just a simple potential Client.

Chapter two – part four

Even in heaven there were some upsetting events. One was the simple tragic fact that a certain percentage of Clients could not find any door whatsoever. There were also situations where an Observatrator not realizing his station, got through one or to doors and then got horribly stuck – especially never ever realizing which door went where! Further in or further out!

One could see them rushing from queue to queue. A hundred explanations why they should be let it. A hundred excuses for some mistake or misunderstanding that kept them out. Their appearance would initially be accepted happily by the Doorkeepers and the Clients. Soon however their patience would be lost. The questions and checks would increase in speed, and the answers, wrong in all cases, be stammered out. Long complicated and usually totally inappropriate answers. Often as not the Clients waiting would start a slow moan and then as the time past the language became – well lets say – not suited to heaven. They would then rush over the next queue and then the next. They knew exactly what pleasures of being accepted would have been, yet soon it became apparent that their chances of acceptance were meager. The pain of non – acceptance increased

No, things weren't necessarily ideal for all, in heaven.

God too became pretty upset about their antics. I think he was most upset by the fact that, notwithstanding his taking on full responsibility for their existence, they never fulfilled any of his preordained plans. They didn't even try adapting to a revised plan. In most cases they were encouraged to get involved in some absolutely pointless glerical duty. Either checking at the doors or scribing the "Ultimate Journal". Never, ever quite finishing what they started. They always seem to find themselves at points of observation. They were called, or at least called themselves "Observatrators". I have a suspicion that they themselves made this name as result of their natural feelings of low self-esteem – always being excluded from joining groups of Clients. Of course there was always a hope that the Observatrators may themselves be recognized by God as a group – if only they could stand still for a few minutes.

Chapter two part five

Unlike myself, God apparently accepted soldiering and to a certain degree cruelty of man to man – he frowned however on the cruelty and destruction of children. How can a child be categorized before he has lived a life?

There was, of course, a special place for the children. They were, in fact, the only real VIPs around in the whole of heaven- the only ones with a bit of "push". There was never any doubt as to where they belonged. There was never any doubt to whom they belonged.

With them there was nothing to bargain about – not a comment to be made. They were all sent straight to a special place in heaven where they were to spend eternity quietly remembering the short warmth of life. So many had arrived with only the final split second as a memory. My book being about a specific child I obviously took note of the children of her people and of this time, brought to their corner.

That second as they were thrown into the gas chambers above the heads of adults. That second when German soldiers caught them on bayonets, after being thrown out of the top window of the orphanage. The thud as the Germans smashed their heads on the sides of trucks, held by their legs, chicken fashion, before the eyes of their mothers. The last second of breathe as they drowned in the blood and gore in the trenches of death and human disgrace.

There they were, each provided with a personal angel who would wrap their torn bodies in their wings covered with the softest white down The down from the undersides of a baby swan's neck. These angels would rise, flamingoes in the setting sun over the oceans – continually changing formations. The angels themselves were the most beautiful creatures you could imagine with huge hearts and gallons of love – making up for the lack of, well actually, unneeded intelligence. In most cases the children had received a huge quota of love from their loved - ones on earth. The love from up in heaven and down on earth would, in the normal course of events, keep them still and quiet.

As they arrived and passed through heaven, the various groups of Clients would fall silent. A gasp here, a tear there. Occasionally a quiet moan from a Client-child. Each child tenderly guided by a personal angel to a corner of heaven made of pure gold, created by that special love held for children.

Each angel slowly, slowly stroking its child's broken body with long warm soft wings. Singing a lullaby. Each trying desperately to stop that shiver. Trying desperately to rekindle the trust and hope in existence itself, disregarding the brevity of its life, its unformed soul. Each child with its personal angel, to care for it till the end of eternity and more.

Chapter two part seven

One would imagine that vengeance would be a major item of discussion. The angels had no time on their hands to contemplate this and the other Clients were only concerned as to whether and where they would find their eternal-resting place.

God, of course, had his way of doing things, which for a long time now was beyond simple comprehension. If one called for vengeance I certainly would not suggest you rely on Him.

During this period of history, of course, there was a massive inflow of Clients into heaven. They can handle it there. Remember the value of property has no meaning up there (to the horror of some potential Clients I personally know). The premises were able to be enlarged or even doubled with a single wave of God's arm.

During this period of history God seemed to be constantly waving. God would spend days circling Heaven, trying to help his new Clients. But it is obvious to anyone who cares to take note; God had many other serious related problems to focus on. Often he would leave in the middle of some important task he had set himself and move on to something else. He never seemed to finish anything He started. He often tried hard to concentrate on some desperate prayer coming up but as often as not, another prayer in another language intruded and He felt forced to move on. Sometimes He shrugged his shoulders and shouted down, booming thunder; "Read the Book already – for what I had it written - for what I had it printed" (He spoke in a very strong Yiddish accent, by the way). Even if God had been ordered and focused I see little way of Him handling all the requests he received but being what He was His existence was one of continual whirl and twirl. He felt completely relieved only when he got back to heaven and relaxed in his huge cushioned golden throne. True the bickering and squabbling in the background of the various Clients sometimes gave him a headache. It had became a gentle background hum as his thoughts spread out to more general ideas and over all planning, rather than having to decide where this or that specific Client was to spend eternity.

I have a haunting suspicion that there may be a number of parallel Gods, each taking his turn – while the others had a good shloff.

This theory also may also solve the mystery of why each religion has different day of rest! This theory even justify those seven day Adventists!

Chapter two part eight

My reader, as I am writing this I have a particular Observatrator breathing heavily over my shoulder. Not only does his emphysema disturb me, but his bad breathe has followed him even from heaven.

I had indeed made an agreement with them to show me around heaven. I had a premonition of what was to befall me so, mainly for the sake of this book, I allowed myself a quick tour of what may be.

All other heavenly workers refused on the basis that the burden of work was too heavy to allow any break allowing a transmission of information. I explained to all that the story I intended writing was most important. I had to find the meaning of "morality" without that perilous razor - blade of belief. I had been visited the parts of Earth and Time where all vestiges of "morality" as previously understood had been crushed then crashed unbridled onto the quagmire of depravity.

I had to know how things worked up there.

Maybe Up There I could find the answer of Down Here.

I've had always preferred the desert, with its simplicity of life and death that the complexity of the fertile areas with all the plants and beasts surviving at the expense of each other through vast complex Byzantine-like plots of nature.

Was heaven the desert of belief, or the of fertility of doubt?

My quests for information were always discarded with comments such as, "Soon you'll be here and you'll learn soon enough", or "Not now – can't you see we are all so busy with our tasks?"

Thus I hesitantly approached one of the Observatrators.

Their appearance always a little more than disturbing - muddy shoes on pigeon feet, shirt, pants, worn through and unwashed and more often than not they wore thick spectacles, of totally wrong size and fit, that fell at an angle, making them look as if they were soon to crash off their noses while , the prescription number obviously mixed as they always seemed to bump into some simple obstacle or other. (Which in many cases was probably the cause of them being in heaven in the first place!)

There were Observatrators and Observatroresses, but being in such a mess it was difficult which was which.

I do admit that I had made an agreement with a bunch of them I found arguing some irrelevant matter or other.

In return for a full explanation of what was going on, I would, when writing my story, give a complete explanation of their situation. I would try, to the best of my ability, to put their case forward, on the off-chance that God, after having read my book, as He was sure to do, finally recognize them, or at least some of them, as a group. As a group some of them, they too would surely receive a category their own and maybe eternal rest for some - and some hope for the others.

With good cause, I had hoped they would forget about the agreement the moment I left as I had absolutely no concept of how I could have been any assistance.

This particular Observatrator claims that I did not perform up to expectations. He thus demands his right to explain here without intervention from other sources. He is demanding to write this section of *my* book!

His high-pitched mumbling resembles that of a Fiat Cinicianto filled with pasta fattened Sicilian women, struggling up a broken country road littered with dry shrubs towards their hilltop village.!

(My reader he is jumping up and down frantically behind me and pushing me slowly off the computer chair. Let's allow him a minute or two.)

Ahem – yes, thank you.

I had been given to understand that this was to be a story relating to definition of Universal morality and immorality. All we have until now has been some kind of mish mash story related vaguely to events which may or may not have taken place within the writers life or alternatively within the scope of the writers conscious or conscience. Not that I personally have anything for or against the story as such, nor even of the style he has utilized, entertaining all and sundry with events that may or may not have occurred, of course, depending on whether the writer ever concludes the book or not and if so, whether anyone would purchase it or alternatively borrow it from a purchaser - which in my opinion would more likely be the case unless...

I would like, if possible, put forward a description of our situation and have you understand the injustice we feel that has been our lot. It is this very description that we feel is lacking and its this very description that was to be expressed in return for an tour of Heaven and great detail we had given the writer. True the description has been subjective. As all descriptions are, I suppose. Depending, of course on the definition of the word "Description" and, of course, the word "Subjective" Which, by the way, is a totally new story and should be remembered by the writer to be written about in the future. Also, not being permitted into all areas, some descriptions may not, indeed, be the true state of affairs.

(STOP KICKING! I am getting to the point!)

In order to understand the goings on up there we have to understand the happening down where you are.

The question thus is what is Moral, what is Immoral and what is Cruel. In our opinions Morality is related to the complying with the rules legislated by your group. The groups may be structured linearly so one can belong to a small group that belongs to a bigger group and so on or alternatively many groups may form a big group and the bigger group may join up with similar such group to form another. The more one's belonging is satisfied the greater the group one belongs to – and of the greater one fulfills the plan so designed. Thus nearly everything we do while still on earth is thus related to various groups. I see you are confused.

Yes. And the group of the "Confused" is one being heavily promoted at the moment – still with, notwithstanding the great demand, little success.

Look let me describe this process of "Moral categorization and degree" in another way.

Many of our Clients are shocked to discover the cruelest dirty monsters being mixed in with sweet innocent angel-like Clients. It is so difficult for me to explain. I shall ask you one question – was the man ripping up the pagan on the rack during Spanish Inquisition moral or immoral. Immoral – you say.

Now if I said that the Inquisition was after the Black Plague – having killed two thirds of Europe, and the people really believed it was their fault allowing pagans and Jews in their presence. And if the Jews' religious laws concerned itself with cleanliness, a great asset during a plague and doctoring a very Jewish profession. And thus more Jews survived proportionately - now say you what? Now say you what?! You see, there is a vast difference between morality and cruelty. Those Priests were Moral and Cruel.

Who are we then, the Observatrators? We are those who after many, many tries are just NOT allowed through any door. Most of us had never realized throughout our lives that we really didn't belong to any particular group. We usually thought that we were simply born into the situation we found ourselves. We felt that we should somehow belong but the need and the means simply weren't there. The "Belonging" part of our brains just didn't exist. We had no group that we wanted or for that matter wanted us!

Walls and doors never existed in our minds or in our heaven. We flashed around as mortals mimicking the actions of others – thinking we were part of the show! We could be seen creating new concepts in science or maybe, rather less than discretely, peeing on the side of a road. We could be seen playing Mozart as if the world didn't exist or a flying single engine plane under a bridge over the Seine, upside-down.

One could say that as individuals we have done the most for the development of mankind – yet only here, in Heaven have we to come to terms with the fact that no group has our fit. We just never got around learning the rules – they always, always seemed so irrelevant.

We Observatrators are thus immoral. Immorality being the inability to conform to any particular group. Immoral and kind. (As a general rule). Obviously there aren't degrees of immorality. Inability is inability. On / off. That's it. One cant be

What is Amoral then, you ask? Amorality is used as a nice word for Immoral. It suggests however, that there are cases where one is neither moral nor amoral – that is neither following the rules nor not following the rules. Obviously this can't be.

Often God asks us to jot down a few of our observertrations. It has been said by the cynical that our jotting is of little use to Him, they point out that our jots are anyway lost in the heavenly winds way before completion. Yet, I must admit, however, that, in heaven, we have, to a degree, to a degree mind, found peace and have finally come to terms with ourselves and our particular condition..."

(Stop jabbing me! A few minutes more. A few more lines. I wish to re-approach this from another angle. This is really important for us Observatrators!)
Ahem. Let me give a graphic dissipation of part of my life. Maybe this could clear things up for you a bit.
Nothing in society seems to be arbitrated. Always, always these circles of organization and stratification. How get one element to co-operate with another without this? How otherwise can one get the elements to belong to the whole - to its "group"? Besides belonging there is also the DEGREE-DING of that belonging. And it's the degree-ding that means all.
I have been able observatrate this in every aspect of society. Municipalities, hospitals, factories, trade unions, schools, orchestras and, well, so on.

Then of course we have the armies. They, more than any other, have a very clear system of organization, degree-ding and categorization. For obvious reasons. And it doesn't seem to matter whether in the African jungles, the armies of the Caesar's Rome or some rag-a-taggle terrorist gang.

How easy it is to belong. I remember so well being eighteen at the forced-induction center. And being what I am, observatrating the goings on. Most of the uniforms grabbed away from my reach. And when I finally had a khaki pants and shirt thrown at my face followed by a pair of shoes nothing fitted without a struggle. Yet when I finally stood still, I had flash-changed into a belonging soldier. My eyes glazed over but my smile remained fixed.
I belonged.
I was part proud of OUR achievements and ashamed at OUR excesses. I was the target of OUR enemy and the safe-guard of OUR citizens. It was so easy. I thought to myself how incredible it was that if (for instance) a bus blew up they would announce so many civilians were killed and so many soldiers - and I would immediately identify with one of the latter later. Yet I had done nothing yet but force my crooked body into a uniform.

Being what I am and having been a total failure in contact sports I had requested and received the posting to a canteen in the center of our major city. I, of course, had forgotten to mention my obsessive love of halvah.

I have been told this was the fastest withdrawal of a posting in our army (which, for reasons best not discussed here, very seldom withdraws haha) and sent back to the induction center.
Now began the most frightening game of ping pong - with me as the little white ball. I kept getting posted to different units and returned to induction center over

For some inexplicable reason always arriving to a yet more combatant unit than the one left. I once woke up in a cold sweat dreaming of myself landing up as a fighter pilot, not even knowing where the ignition switch was; never mind the guns and so on, thus shortly after, being shot down in flames.
Months went by as I was shifted throughout the entire organization and through osmotic pressure began, slowly, to understand the workings of the whole system.

Being a member of a Brigade levied responsibilities on me that wasn't much more than belonging to the Army. And the brigade had little responsibilities towards me. In both directions, not much effort was required or exerted. No one actually knew me as more than a name (which I always checked before answering) and a number (which to the day I died I confused with all the various numbers we carry around with us). I must have appeared on the computer somewhere in brigade headquarters - how else did I get my food - how else was I eventually moved inwards towards a battalion or back out? I, on the hand, walked around the Brigade headquarters saluting all kinds of officers rushing around and proudly always wore the brigade insignia. I didn't know who these people were. They obviously saw me as a funny shaped soldier. I notice their eyebrows rise as they accepted my salute.
The larger the organization the smaller the individual and the less he is DEGREED in belonging. The magnet however is still as strong as ever as it searches for some metal to latch onto. He can create for himself some solution. Maybe blanking out all that goes on around. He can, in this situation, allow himself to be manipulated by flags or symbols or hate of some other group. Hate is so easy. Just the color of skin, or accent, or even the smallest difference in prayer to the very same God, will suffice.
Love, I am told, is a far more complex issue. Love is so far more difficult to achieve and maintain - and thus, obviously, has a far greater value. Surely value is the result of effort exerted. I imagine so.
For the initial belonging in a huge organization, such as an army, not much is required other than a uniform and a touch of love, hate maybe pride or other such simple emotion. To increase the DEGREE of belonging one has to get further inside, deeper, where the circle is smaller and judgment can be more easily passed. Where ones individuality slowly matches the group one is within. A trait compliant with the group will move one slowly to the center, smaller groups, and "exception" traits move one back and eventually out.
In the smallest group of soldiers , the "section" usually made up of seven soldiers, we know every last detail of each other - probably more than a married couple.

Everything, everything - from how each drinks his coffee and the smell of each fart and to what is to be expected under pressure-pot conditions.

Being what I am I noticed more the similarities than the differences. Not only was their language so similar but their attitudes, their goals, their dress.

I even noticed while sitting with them around a fire at night, drinking pre-sweetened coffee that their words, body language, and so on, were performed in unison.
When ever I managed to reach this point (and that was seldom) I was shot back towards the induction center - at the speed of an anti - anti- missile - missile!

I admit here that almost all - if not all I performed to get to the inner circle were absolute flukes.

Once I tripped on my laces and rolled out a helicopter into a firing position on the ground as we were taught.

My neighbor at the shooting range mistook my target at the firing range giving me a hundred and seventeen out of a hundred score and a little sharp-shooter medal.

I walked through a mine field having missed the warning and thus arriving back to base first.

I thought the heavy machine gun, mounted on a half track, I was given to hold had got stuck - so I pointed it at grove of banana trees - sending a few terrorists to some category in heaven. Only long afterwards did I remember to release my trigger finger.

I ran through the sea an water maneuvers remembering that sharks had been spotted here (five years before) and almost sprinted up a cliff for the same reason.

The "pongs " of the "ping pong" were unfortunately far more numerous.

To list them here would be a real 'off-subject' diversion. Suffice to comment that I had more search parties after me than in the entire history of wars and armies (I had simply been eating some local fruit whether it be oranges, avocados, or cherries).
Or stealthily creeping through Lebanon the wrong way - nearly landed up in Turkey or Sweden.
Or standing up to my neck in the Sea of Galilee - my little rubber boat having sunk.
Or using my fifty-two mil mortar as an ashtray.

Or throwing the pin and dropping the grenade - event that sent me to heaven.

(Your eyes, your flapping arms, the tapping of your feet are all driving me to a point where I have difficulty concentrating....)

With this he got off my chair, did a sort of dance around my room and stopped behind me, breathing hot, smelly air down my neck - looking over my shoulder reading allowed a number of times, the words and phrases, I am now writing.
"All you have written has been I am sure, vitally important. What in hell's name do you want me to do for you?

"I meant for you and the other Observatrators."

"I want you to start a campaign on Earth among those on Earth intending to go to heaven - again I correct myself - among all of those on earth, as they all, sooner or later, will reach Heaven, to get God to accept the idea of a "GROUP OF ONE?"

There you have it, my dear reader - insanity has finally reached heaven, midst the very staff of God Almighty! There you have , my dear reader condensed Morality.

"Look here! You are asking the impossible. First of all how many people are going to read this book - if any - even my family only pretend to read it - heaping comments of praise, pacifying me.

Secondly how can ONE form a group? The minimum a group could be, cutting the edges of definition, could be two".

He stood up straight, arms hanging limply at his sides, eyeballs peering through the bottom of the spectacles.

He said nothing.

He said not a thing.

"Of all the millions of souls in heavens and the millions of souls at this moment rising, you can't find one to suit you? Not one!"

My reader – his head had been slowly bending over - his eyeballs still fixed on the same spot on the floor.

On writing the last sentence, a shout came bounding down about some new door, which had been opened -just east of the middle of Heaven.

The Observatrator, on hearing this, literally vaulted over my head, but tripping over his untied shoe-laces, performed an uncontrolled cartwheel and disappeared in the direction of wherever.

I sincerely apologize for the disturbing "philosophy" portrayed. I had actually gone over this, in part, a few paragraphs back.

Obviously this is one idea of what Morality is all about.

I've spent most of my existence here on earth arguing about this and that – the various orders – and the order of the various thats's and this's.

But whenever I was put into a position of having to discuss existence, life itself, I find myself escaping, as fast as possible to a safer discourse. One that I could accept.

Sheets about Truth have been written.

Truth apparently exists in sheets. Truths certainly are not simply points of wisdom- aren't they? Sheets overlapping one with the other creating an unending range of different forms as they billow in the wind.

Chapter three part one

After the furious flurry, and when all other activity quieted, I stepped back, lit a smoke and took in our creation. Whenever we had set up camp before, the tents were always smart symbols of soldiery - in absolute straight lines and the canvas pulled taught.

This camp was created wind blown and dismal from the start. Each soldier - his world.

Longing.

We were told, and believed, this setting would be temporary - soon discovering that "temporary" in the Israeli Army must be the most flexible of all words in all languages.

Chapter three part two

It was autumn nineteen-seventy three and the world had, at last, stopped shuddering, had stopped vibrating, rumbling, shaking.

The battle had become a huge mental smoke screen as the battlefield had been smoke screened a few days before.

Clouds upon clouds in all shades of gray during the day – and a million, million shooting stars flying up at night -up to one point from many and from many points to one; yellow, red, white, green - finally dissipated –finally gone.

The white fish-bone clouds of autumn returned to where they had left a few weeks back, the sun however, remained its ominous grey as did that semi-hysterical fear deep in our bellies.

The day turned into the hard stark blue and white of the desert sky.

The nights black - filled with the cold vacuum of solitude - a nightly fast of Gedaliah. Each man filled with the awe of the miracle of his survival.

The Katyushas, the artillery, the jets, the tanks and half-tracks had ended all their abhorrent work. The desert had resisted the shaking and choking – and now, just as suddenly as the struggle had began, lay in silent hibernation.

Listening to my comrades' hushed babble, deadened further by the Sinai sands, I was reminded of families waiting at the gates of a cemetery, for the arrival of the hearse.

Chapter three - part three

Our platoon had been moved back into the Sinai to await further instructions from our Generals.

It would have been nice to describe this period as "a sword being sheathed for later use."

This wasn't the case. This life here wasn't really ours. We weren't the soldiers of the Caesar.

We were Israeli citizens of the seventies, performing our second profession. We all had, in the seventies, two lives and two professions. One could be a butcher and tank commander, or Professor of Mechanical Engineering and the other - an artillery aimer or a bank clerk and the other, commando.

I was not all that good in my army profession nor had I, even at this late age, had not yet decided what direction my civilian life would take – if any. Often I consoled myself by considering that at least they both were on the same level of proficiency. Not very high.

Chapter three part four

We had set up camp near the Birgafkafa airfield.

The Sinai desert here was battered and compressed by the machines of war, and marching soldiers since the beginning of time. I imagined some ancient people pushing wooden war contraptions where the tanks had now created pathways.

Over years of conflict nature seems to have accepted man's incorrigibility and had created an area specifically for this activity. The metal carcasses sprawled around, never an affront to the ecology. Quite the contrary. Ecology welcomed these scraps, as a hyena would ravish the remnants of game.

This section of nature had intentionally left this part of the earth for the deep mental depression of the participants. Nothing would ever, could ever, alter that.

Chapter three part five

My partner, my friend was Gabi. Every aspect of his body and features were huge. However, nothing more than his heart.

We old timer reservists never cried as the today's soldiers are permitted. The most we allowed ourselves was a tear on the lower eyelid... and of course - guts being ripped apart.

Longing. Longing for the illusion of invincibility, we had worn so long ago, for so many years. The illusion of invincibility we screwed into our ears blocking out the sounds of stories we could not, would not hear, the sights of skeletons they told were our families, the carcasses bulldozed into deep pits – falling helplessly one on another. Helplessness that could only be countered by the illusion of absolute, total invincibility.

In situations of stress, I've noticed, people generally tend to cope better with a partner. Taking into account the combatants would be in a situation of stress, many of the orders we receive were in fact based on the principal that one would be equipped with such a partner. We are given, for instance only half a pup tent. A partner is needed every now and again for the "ceremonial" shower. The pouring water from a Gerry can over head and back. We were instructed how to inject each other in times of gas warfare. Indeed many weapon had a "number one" and "number two." In my specific case, being what I am, usually losing half my equipment before lunch, I was fortunate having this partner willing to share what ever he had until managing (in retrospect - probably being fed up with me) to "liberate" them from someone else.

In my specific case, I definitely needed a partner to encourage me to dig my foxhole a bit deeper than the scratch I had intended to make in the hard desert. True, I quietly cursed him when only we were left digging, as he said, "the deepest foxholes in the history of war" while the rest of the platoon were all puffing on their free foreign smokes. I cursed him quietly again when with shells were raining down and I had been ordered to remain on the jeep listening to the battle gabble over the radio. And cursed him quietly yet again - when a close hit caused my whole effort to collapse - sandbags and all and the resulting in re-dig of the "deepest foxhole in the history of war" in order to rescue my equipment!

He protected me from the events happening while I was drifting off during periods of total exhaustion or despair. I laugh now thinking how he saved me from a bus being pushed sideways by a tank trying to get to the front towards my sleeping body. (Yes, in those days we went to war in busses and laundry delivery vehicles!)

His physical power, his strength physical and mental, his size – his presence always gave me just that extra bit to keep me going another minute, another hour. Power. Power that was no illusion.

We had trained in this unit and for this war. We usually spent our time in reserve training together, learning, to the n'th degree, each other's idiosyncrasies. Generally, in conscripted armies, soldiers tend to miss the third dimension of their comrades. It was frightening to conceive of soldiers having depth. It was best seeing soldiers as planks of wood. It was most frightening to express your depth of soul than acting the soldier made of planks of wood. I even developed a theory that many people enjoy escaping from that very third dimension and sign on, becoming planks forever.

During the war itself we had witnessed so many events that should have broken many a man's backbone.

We had seen men sitting in trucks, playing shesh-besh, vaporized, in a split

We had seen busses, exactly like ours, burnt out, trying to deliver its contents to some forward position.

We had seen the piles of twisted legs, dressed in our uniform, our boots, piled one on another in the back the command-cars, returning from the area we were headed.

We had seen wide-eyed, panic stricken children-soldiers their worlds, their youth, destroyed in minutes of ambush. We had seen men, wounded in every way possible, lying in a front-line dressing station, no sound passing from their mouths – not allowing their suffering to destroy the moral of others - heroes each one.

We saw and we saw and we saw.

It has been told that in the First World War the last carriage of a troop train carried the coffins for the soldiers being taken to the front.

We too found ourselves on the conveyer belt of death.

I had held him as he received the lists as he did for me when it was my turn a few days later. There is an Israeli song – "Men cry only at night". This is but a song. For us night never came.

It was autumn nineteen-seventy three and the world had, at last, stopped shuddering, had stopped vibrating, rumbling, shaking , we were lying in out little tents timeframe uncharted. We chatted about this and that. Long chains of ideas based on little but a very blunt feeling - and long chains of feelings based on very a blunt idea.

He was a gym teacher in a Junior School – teaching English and Gym. He had been a volunteer before the war in sixty seven and had got into a paratrooper brigade and fought in Jerusalem, after which joined a kibbutz. I listened as his dry description of climbing hills getting out of "situations" - always taking his chances on behalf of others. Lying beside him in the tent for days on end, listening to his history, I would sometimes turn and look at him and wonder of the contrast between the stories I was hearing - this young gym teacher, once kibbutz shepherd.

I remember, in training, how he always ran shooting the heavy .05 FN Belgium machine-gun - lifting it as if it was a light hockey stick. Running over every obstacle as if an unseen God had flattened them for him.

Always shooting in batches of three - always three.

jugajugajuga-----jugajugajuga------jugajugajuga.

Just three. Always just three.

I shall always remember him helping me adjust my webbing and equipment before battle, checking my magazines, showing me the tricks of carrying extra ones, checking my water canisters and all my personal equipment. Making me jump so as to make sure that all equipment was properly tied and noiseless. A gentle Father to a child starting school – my hands shaking far too much to be of any use – him talking quietly about his kibbutz, his kids, his school, describing his wife, his girlfriend, not skipping a word nor heart beat.

Where has that invincibility gone?

To be a man again.

Standing there, tanned skin, rolled up sleeves, shirt buttons untied, helmet buckled over chin.

Sten in hand.

No one dare touch the tribe again

Never again!

We have returned!

No one dare.

I was told that we experienced the heaviest rain of shelling in military history till then, Gabi was seen walking around calmly, fox hole to fox hole, chatting away, or sitting with soldiers, sharing his battle ration halvah.

Chapter three part six

The days past. Misery meshed in with boredom, wind-howling biting sandstorms shattered the remnants of security in one's soul. The decision of our whole unit to remain inside the tents, inside sleeping bags for unending days except, of course, the various daily body rituals – which became major events.

"How did your family get here, where did they come from? Where are they now? Why did you come here? Why did you stay? Gabi I know so much of you within the context of the army but so little of what motivates you. Let me see that hidden dimension. Soldiers seem always to miss the third dimension. Tell me. Tell me all."

Thoughts turned to language and flowed out with little restraint.

I have a trouble translating this from Hebrew, verbatim. Modern Hebrew having so fewer words than other languages, we use tend to use more body, eye and hand language, as well as melodic intonation in our speech.

Comrades with close intellectual or political affinity can get away with flash of eye contact, a slight shrug of the shoulder. The head being thrown back slightly in conjunction with the eyebrows can mean more than the entire Oxford Dictionary. We have evolved these as the English have evolved "understood words or expressions".

Often I explain to foreigners that it is as humorous for an Israeli watching an English-speaker charm his girlfriend using only his mouth standing as if to attention, as it is to an Englishman watching an Israeli, for instance, giving road instructions - using maybe five words. I absolutely love the way we shrug shoulders, raise eyebrows, crumple foreheads, open eyes, hands, push chins forward, flick heads back, click tongues. Done in unison this can compress an entire two-hour elucidation on the political and socio-economic situation of the entire country/ middle-east / world.

I noticed as the battle became more catastrophic, more and more Yiddish words and expression seemed to creep in. "Gevalt", "Kish mir in toches". Our parents' and Grandparents' curses flushing out of the mouths of us NEW Jews. The same ones, who handled rifles and carburetors with the same dexterity as our ancestors, not so long ago, opened the ark or rolled the scroll.

And there we lay. Time, a short while back had been measured in minutes and sometimes seconds. Days now melted into one another – blurring, meshing one into the other –meaningless days.

One morning Gabi woke me.

Bending over me he said, "Lets go" he had got on all his battle gear and Uzi. "Let's just go – everyday here is a non-day. Non-day after bloody non-day wiped from our brains before sunrise. Let's make at least one – 'One Day'. A day different to the others - a "bubble day" we will remember forever".

I followed him into the desert. We walked quickly out of sight of the little camp.

He did not say a word. Nor I. Every now and again stooping down – examining evidence of some past, insane, transient, existence.

Sometimes picking up and throwing. Sometimes picking up and storing either in a pouch or under some webbing or in a pocket.

We found an old British mail sack.

We both stared at it as if it had fallen off the moon. Here even the mail sack had a story. A story of soldiers' letters written and all lost, lost in the timeless desert. How much romance, passion, how many intertwined relationships had joined the wind. Soldiers gone – letters gone – senders gone. Whole chunks of life had been bitten – chewed and digested.

Left now - this thin slim outer-skin.

Wars, battles long forgotten.

Like ours to be?

He threw it over his shoulder.

The questions were getting more involved. The answers way out the realm of our lives.

The sun began burning.

We arrived at a deep ravine. We searched down and in the distance defined the blackened wreckage of something larger than the usual burnt corpse of a tank or truck. As we approached we discerned the blade of a huge propeller buried in the sand - the other bent over, as if a giant swimmer had stopped in mid – stroke. Drama stopped in mid- stroke. The burnt black shells of Egyptian soldiers scattered in a clear circumference. Some stopped as the fire engulfed them in mid-run – some just blown meters from the 'copter. Some on their sides. Some on their back. All sizzled by the enormous explosion that had taken place. Pilot's head down, still desperately pulling on his joystick All burned – all gone. I remember watching Gabi standing by the side of the plane. One leg on the other. Leaning to keep his balance. I started a slow examination.

How many work-hours?

How many rivets?

How many plans?

Smashed?

We just stood there

In the silence.

And then slowly examined Death

We did not look for answers.

As the questions poured over us.

Questions put aside for later.

We too were soldiers –

Blackened shells to be?

The lists of our dead friends juxtaposed themselves over them.

Yes, we had seen so many dead only a few days before, but for some reason, here was a difference. The dead enemies then were - "Danger Set Aside" or "Aggression Relieved" or some other such flashing phrases. The dead here were naked. Here they were nothing but charred black Fathers, brothers, dreamers.

The images and thoughts were too painful to contend with.

The reek of rotting flesh mixed into oil and burnt sand.

We soon realized that two helicopters had been shot down. Not three hundred meters away lay the other. Again the soldiers in their final positions, sealed by the flames of death.

What struck us was the enormity of the event yet so insignificant in the course of battle. Insignificant in the course of history. Insignificant in the cold, dry desert.

If only I had the ability to breathe life back into one of them – just one. I had so much to ask.

Silence. Stillness

And the war was not yet over – the Israeli army was at rest – a mongrel street dog, huffing - tongue out – licking its wounds- waiting for the next encounter.

This time I put my hand on Gabi's shoulder.

"Let's get the fuck out of here."

As we reached the top of the ravine, we looked back.

A purple haze slowly sheathed the planes, the victims and then the ravine.

The sheathe slowly grew and twisted into a huge purple haze stretching further and further up to heaven. We distinguished clearly through the purple, flashes of yellow, white and blue.

It was then we both heard this hysterical laughter. Initially it was as if the pilots were trying to communicate something to us. Then slowly each of the soldiers rose up from the positions. First those pilots and then slowly each of the soldiers. First one or two, then all of them. We saw them being sucked up, further and further towards heaven, all laughing almost hysterically, some pointing – all looking at Gabi. All trying desperately to make contact with him but even if failing this – bursting out into louder and louder, hysterical laughter reaching what could only be described as a "choral screech."

Echoing through a huge church hall.

They knew their revenge lay somewhere in Gabi's future.

In our army, it is said, that all is in the hands of fate.

It is said that if your name is written on a bullet – your fate is sealed.

Was there an Egyptian lying out there who had dreamed my dreams? My dreams of desperation, controlled mania, in which I searched warehouse after warehouse, searched barrel after barrel of bullets, crates of shells, rockets, shelf after shelf of bombs, mines, and all the other killing devices conceived by man.

Yes, my dear reader, Man.

The name of each victim or columns of victims engraved deeply on the side of each item or container.

The deliberations – the pleadings I had engaged in with each of the various storemen.

I remember being pulled into reality howling my name – hoping some kind storeman would, maybe, just maybe, have mercy and scratch, burn, my name off some deadly container being packed onto a truck heading for the front – maybe even as I tried negotiating.

That search never ended. Not a year after the war ended.

Not thirty years after.

Chapter four – part one

Turning for "home" a green flare flew over us leaving a thin trail of white smoke in the now cleared blue sky. Then another. We looked way back and were just able to make out three tiny figures - jumping, waving wildly.

With cocked Uzis we started towards them. As we approached we recognized the typical Israeli reserve-army battle insignia. Sandbags built high with a blasting radio carefully balanced on top. Well oiled machine-guns (doubling as washing-line poles, half washed socks and underpants set out it seemed, more for display than drying), mortars and anti-tank rockets, all pointing, Mafia style, in every direction. Drawings of every shape and size, on every free part of canvas as well as clever poems and comments relating to various unfortunately suppressed sexual longings. Tons of cigarettes sent by well-meaning citizens. Tons of food of supplementary food – over and above the boxes of battle rations - sent by a supply officer, who obviously having read about armies marching on their bellies or something similar, was thus intent on all of us having bloated bellies.

The soldiers here had no problem related to bellies, all well displayed behind gray vests.

And of course, the traditional "Ban the Bomb" sign which I began to find totally appropriate in our army. With the Jewish problem of keeping secrets, having an atomic bomb was kept on the hush, hush, much like having an aircraft carrier

One of the more startling things I had noticed about battle was the masses of people involved. A whole city - each going about a particular task. One of the clear images that remain from that battle was of a smiling, moustached, Military Policeman standing in the middle of burning tanks and artillery, directing the traffic! I was nearly killed by a bus being pushed aside by a tank. (Yes – in those days we went to battle in conscripted busses and laundry vans. Of course later, with great pride, we saw looted Russian army trucks being pulled back and almost immediately put back into service.)

The terror of the command-cars returning from the direction where we were headed! The loads of bouncing corpses - my uniform, my boots. The hustle and bustle. A shout here, a moan there.

Huge tanks topped with young kid-soldiers – heading towards the furnace. We would flash them the famous Israeli army "fuck the enemy" – sign, fists up and a slap on the upper arm.

"Don't worry, old Jew," they'd flash back, "We'll fuck 'em for you and for all that they've done to our ancestors!." Smiling and raising their sign-fists to us, lowly pedestrians.

Then as they passed, our "fuck 'em" sign changed into the slow wave of: "Maybe you better just get back to Mom and finish your home-work and leave all this rubbish to us old farts – for the sake of God – just get back!!".

But battle has a momentum all of its own and any communication always seemed to be drowned out in the roar and dust of the tanks and the constant rumble of artillery, katyushas, missiles, aircraft and the trembling earth. That bloody, trembling earth!

The crackling radio- "... our pinnacle has been put out action - permanently". Fifteen matches have been burned – twelve cracked – some seriously – send wheels urgently, I say for the second time, URGENTLY... over..."

What kind of city, this the City of Battle?

I am absolutely convinced that if there was ever a master plan it was soon defunct. Maybe some General was left pouring over it, wondering blindly about some lost sparse sand dune that in his mind had become essential to hold for a satisfactory outcome.

We often are led to believe that war is nice and orderly. Huge toys of battle with soldiers standing in ironed khaki lining up, then falling down. No. Battle is more like a Middle Eastern Souk. Hundreds, thousands of soldiers, hundreds of thousands– each performing a little task they were trained for and generally being disturbed by others getting in their way.

Today's wars are huge messes. In our ultra-individualistic Israeli society, each soldier regards himself as the "king-pin" of the operation and pushes in what he regards to be the right general direction. Each one negotiating the fine route between destruction and survival. All the others are just there to help him or to destroy. Orchestrated-cacophony! The number of shells that was required for one killing always amazed me! We would cower in our little furrow all night shells

Taking the above paragraphs into consideration, My Reader, you thus can imagine how flabbergasted we were on discovering these three soldiers on this little mound of rock.

Chapter four part two

Out came the Turkish coffee. In every unit in the Israeli army, there is always one soldier who takes upon himself the task of coffee maker. The ceremony of coffee brewing never changes and always ends with the coffee maker looking into the eyes of the first taster, waiting for the expected "slurp" then "hmmm!" and then finally snap of the tongue, tension relaxed the coffee maker allows himself to continue the pouring process until the very last dregs. Personally I prefer having my coffee boiled seven times. This, however, has less to do with the taste than that evil eye which seems, more often than not, to be constantly peering down at me.

And so it was – in this bleak desert outpost –visiting Bedouin, sipping cups of Turkish coffee, sweetened to register that we were welcome, the following discourse was had.

Chapter four part three

As usual we started off about the latest basketball result. (Sometimes I wonder whether Israel being in the European basketball circuit was all that was left of us once being Europeans.) Very soon, the tone dropped and they began telling us of their war.

They were airplane spotters. They were the back up of a back up, on the chance that the entire field radar system blanked out totally. They had received battle rations for a few weeks and left to fend for themselves, as it were. We were their first direct communication with other flesh humans since the beginning of the war. Their war consisted of feeling the non-stop rumbling earth – watching the multicolored sky day and night and of course, keeping an eye on the aircraft of both sides.

As it is with soldiers after battle, their war experiences were central – they had little interest in others history. Initially they talked slowly, carefully but as the disclosure continued, all control was lost. Speed, volume increased echoing over the desert. Precision became less important and thus they stopped correcting one another. The sentence of one overlapped the other.
Gabi and I stared at them – saucer eyed. If these men had been traumatized – what had happened to us – us who had been in the cauldron?
In the flames – black and purple in the center – yellow and orange on the outside with a flicker of the sky occasionally seen through it all.
If these men had been traumatized – how far back did the waves of trauma resonate?
They weren't even aware of the dog feasting on a corpse and while being shot at, charging off with a hand still dripping with blood.
Yet these men were traumatized.
Unheard of – unmentioned – not televised, less so written about – yet heroic, heroic as they had faced history, and had been where they were sent. A green grocer, a postman, sent to protect their tribe to best of their ability, if not more.

They told of Migs cart wheeling over the desert towards them. They told of air battles. They told of our planes being tracked and hit by highflying missiles – planes falling, some with parachutes opening behind them – some without. They told of lying on their backs, as taught, shooting wildly, with nineteen forty - eight Czechoslovakian bolt rifles, towards attacking supersonic jets.

My Reader, we don't have many real professional soldiers – these were simple citizens – a green grocer, a postman – observing Dante's hell.

They told of the convoys of vehicles moving into the dust cloud. And of the vehicles returning. Twisted legs hanging out the back of trucks. Bodies of boys placed over the mudguards and engine bonnets – as the moose of Vermont, in the autumn hunting season.

In autumn.

Yes, they did see the helicopters come down. A hundred thousand bullets had gone into them as they approached. At night. A spray of white and red bullets. It had been a commando attack. Yes, they heard the screams. The inferno. The death charge of burning Egyptian soldiers deep into the wadi.

Our brains span at phenomenal speed. Our own experiences falling over the stories being heard.

The stories ended. We all desperately searched for some menial chore. Someone went off to the hill set aside as the toilet. One started washing the coffee utensils. Another started tightening the tent ropes or banging the stakes in yet deeper. The third lay on his back, his head on a rock, thinking of his baby at home.
Not a word was spoken.
Gabi and I just sat there watching them.

Chapter four part four

All returning quietly to the original sitting area, our hosts pointed out the clouds spreading over us. In an attempt to extend our visit they pointed this out and started an intensive interview of Gabi.
Where was he from?
South Africa.
Hmmm.
Which town?
Cape Town.
Hmmm.
When did he get here?
Nineteen sixty five.
Hmmm.
Why did he come here?
Three good but forgotten reasons.
They laughed.
Where were his parents from?
Lithuania

We both eyed the shakshuka being prepared and the waft of fresh coffee filling the desert air.

Silence. Well they knew their bait, and hooked their prey. In retrospect I imagine their loneliness. Sailors in a sailing boat meeting another during a lull in the storm.

Wandering Bedouins finding another tribe in the desert trying to eke out a few more minutes of comradeship and of life-sustaining news.

"Allow me to tell you a good joke."

Seldom Gabi talked nor joked but when started – he was usually as unstoppable - an express train.

"My Great-grand Father had been inducted into the Lithuanian army for thirty years. Most Jews were conscripted for thirty years by the intolerant Czars, hoping that in this may start an effective assimilation process thus solving the Jewish problem."

(Here I had a slight inward facing "hmm" – thinking of the thirty five years we serve as Israeli reservists and all that entails and I don't yet see any Jewish problem being solved here either.)

"In return for his long and faithful service to the Czar including some battle in Crimea, he was granted a small piece of land at the edge of Kovna."

"As tends to happen – the town expanded and the land – now grown over by the town had a certain value – certainly a lot more than the generous Czar had intended in his time.

"At a certain point of history – during the First World War – the Jews of Lithuania, being distrusted by the Czar. He feared they may spy on behalf of the Germans. Yiddish being so close to German, they were forced to leave the area close the front. My Mothers family trekked deep into Russia. War over, the children returned sadly orphaned by the epidemic that raged at the time."

"Anyway my Mother and her brothers miraculously got their land back. When my Father and mother married they decided to sell the land giving them the required money proving their self- sustenance needed for a visa to South Africa. The key opening the gates of South Africa. All other gates of the world locked tight to people with Jewish genes. They decided to first bring my Moms orphaned brothers –and later, after them, my Dad's.

"They sent the same money back to Lithuania

"Bringing out her brother Solly - then back for Jacob

" Then back again for both little Mendel and Moshe. Moshe loved playing cards more than his skill should have allowed. "

He was relating this to us holding back a burst of laughter.

"By the time the ship had docked in Cape Town the money was gone and my Dads family was stuck in Lithuania".

He now searched the desert. From this point one could just see the Suez Canal.

"Comrades! Half my family was lost in a game of cards"

His laughter came from his belly that seemed to last for ever. His huge body shook as he held onto the rock he was sitting on trying to balance himself. His mouth was as wide as the uncontrollable laughter poured out
We looked at him in total shock.
What had made him tell us this story? Why did he call it a joke? We froze where we were, staring at him but we knew we were already far from his conscious.

He stood on the sandbagged machine gun emplacement, then still laughing looked down into the wadi and then again towards the Suez Canal.

Without warning Gabi started running holding his Uzi pointing to heaven – shooting batches of three, just three, and all the time laughing.

Over and over. Juga juga juga ; juga juga juga

.The laugh spread itself of the cooling, darkening Sinai. The laugh slowly changed to a high pitched scream, totally unmatched by Gabi's appearance. The scream of desolation. Desolation which was, which is, and which is yet to be.

We ran after him. Only when his magazine finally emptied did he stop. He threw his Uzi down into the wadi followed by his webbing, his shirt, and the old Post Bag.

He sat. The tears flowing through the dirt of battle. I put an arm about him and held him tight hoping to absorb some of the extreme pain. I held him tight to stop the trembling. Again he let out a horrendous scream but this time it ended in laughter – a hysterical laughter. He lay down on the sandy rock – face with no protection – flat on the rock – his eyes rolled up and his lids came down.

The most wonderful thing about Israel for a writer is that one can grab the hand of anyone – anyone – and ask story. We all have stories – some that go on for hours and some that never end.

So here I sat. Stroking Gabis neck – thinking of this new story while my new friends sat a short distance behind each thinking theirs.

For a short moment we were past being Jews or Israelis or soldiers of the engineering corps. We had become two empty men with beaten flesh and broken hearts.

And with no alternative.

Chapter five – part one

It always seems so incongruous to me in my travels through the green forests and fields of Europe – that anyone could even consider conducting wars there. How brilliantly white snows are – impossible to imagine them stained with blood.

The air, so clear so fresh – can this be denied even to the lowliest creature, even for a second. Birds for instance, circumvent Lebanon – having slowly developed a definite allergy to the Lebanese sport of hunting.

Why is it that the soldiers of the various armies never notice that they were the only ones in the entire Animal kingdom performing such disgusting activities? And of course the whole Animal kingdom, apart from some peripheral damage, usually lived thoughtlessly through our wars, singing, tweeting, mooing and doing what Animals and birds generally do.

Kovna is situated in green forests of Pine, Oak and Elm trees, on the banks of the Neris river –waters slowly sliding down to the Baltic and freedom.

Gabi's Father's family, after a hundred discussions and plans, found itself unfortunately, stuck there after the Russians had withdrawn. Shoes in the wet mud, hardly able to move – the pull of a vacuum preventing almost all movement every time

How beautiful, for instance, are the winding rivers of Lithuania.

My wars were mainly in deserts, semi-deserts.

The thought of having mass violence in such a green lush country as in Lithuania with cool winding rivers seems an affront to nature.

one leg was raised - while the waters of the Neris flowed by.

Life had become a political theater of the cruel absurd.
The Germans had not yet entered when the Lithuanians began expressing their hatred – accusing the Jews, from new born babies to senile old-timers for having been pro-communist - pro-Russian whereas not one generation back the Russians accused them, speaking Yiddish of being pro-German and expelled them away from the front to the hinterland of Russia.

Chapter five part two

By that summer Sorrele had already experienced the family's first horrendous tragedy. Lithuanians had killed her husband after a wild street round up of Jews. One of a thousand destroyed before the Germans had crossed the border.
On the way to Fort seven for an execution, water forced into his anus, at the Litrukis Garage on _____Street, his body had exploded and skull smashed with a crow bar.
Someone in his group had apparently managed to escape. The group had been let off the truck to clean the garage of manure left by the Russian horses. Someone apparently managed to escape.
The family was so told and was told how the Lithuanian population had stood watching, cheering and clapping and laughing and cursing!
The pain of loss was so intense but on hearing of how her husband's body had been so abused – the warm body that had been inside her and loved her and filled her with his sperm that created their daughter,
Sorrele fell over and never really got up again.

Autumn also had seen her two brothers take off to Russia to join the Soviet Army.

The Lithuanian Brigade – where Yiddish was, not surprisingly, the main language.

Chapter five – part three

As the Germans entered, there was a chaotic, desperate flight in all directions of the already hunted Jews.

There were those who rushed off to find safety in far off villages or tried a usually foiled attempt at getting into Russia – the German army having already reached and sealed the border before they got there.

There were those who rushed to the main cities from the villages to find safety in numbers.

Many took refuge in history –had they not been there for nine hundred years?

Many took refuge in the humanity of their neighbors. Maybe empathy.

History, humanity, empathy – winds blowing unbridled through the trees.

The leaves had almost completely fallen off the oaks and the elms. The pines, being more primitive, being simpler and having no idea about changing seasons and the like, kept their coverings on.

Interesting how some species have survived through ignorance.

The cold began seeping in. Every morning began with the mist flowing gently soundlessly over the hills and farms and in the cities. The ground icing over.
Sorrele and her eldest brother, his wife and children, lived with her Dad and Mom. Sorrele trusted all them so much.
They surely would never allow anything to harm neither her nor her baby daughter.

Chapter five part four

The Germans came. That autumn. The Germans.

The part of town, Slobotke, where they lived, became the ghetto. To the population of two or three thousand Jews were added thirty thousand from the City center and outlying districts. They lived in a wooden slat ramshackle house, as were all the houses on the narrow streets. Sloped red roofs, smoky chimneys and a large area at the back where they grew vegetables and once kept a rooster or two.

Their house had doubled as a bakery. The warmth and smell of baking crispy bread created a constant flow of friends, neighbors and customers, using it as a place for congregating, a place for gleaning whatever news could be gleaned. Now that the area was a ghetto it didn't seem so strange that those who used to sit around chatting, brought their families to stay – each in another room.

Of course the little outhouse lavatory which, now lacking municipal services , had become more than problematical.

That autumn. Her Dad had gone out "just for a few minutes" to see what was what and never came back. Just never came back.

Never.

Being still a child she vented her anger neither on the Lithuanians nor Germans but on her Father she had loved so dearly. She had trusted him yet he disappeared. He had gone to see what was what and just never came back.

Never.

From the moment of her husband's death she had wished to be as dead as him, with him but remained alive – almost a determined decision – alive for her daughter.

With diligence she wiped the thoughts of her husband – even his name – from brain. Her brother Mottle now began filling the vacuum left by all her disappearing family.

Remembering Mottle. Mottle the brother who had left for South Africa years before now kept her on this side of sanity. She nearly let go but held on for her daughter.

She managed to keep.

She had kept all the letters. Mottle's son was at university - learning to be a doctor – it seemed so far away, another planet. When this is over she will be there with her daughter – when this is over she will once again stroke his wavy hair and put her hands around his neck. He will be amazed at her daughter and she will stroke his wavy hair.

As the months went by the hunger pains intensified –desperation began to set in.

Despair.

She slowly withdrew from the environment and all that was happening. She began seeing the world only through the eyes of her daughter.

Sorrele sat mainly in the corner of what had been the living room, on the floor, and took care of her daughter. And dreamed of what was and what will be.
A day came within which there were a few hours where the Jews of the small ghetto were sent, under threat of instant death over the bridge to the part of the Ghetto where she was. They had returned the houses in the "Small ghetto" on the other side of the bridge to the Lithuanians and their house became even more packed. Sorrele felt little difference; she had her corner with her daughter next to her Mom.
She heard nothing and saw nothing except for that which was related to her daughter – when she would always return a smile as dry as the sands of the Sinai.

Chapter five part five

She would close her eyes and recall the days, so long ago when she used to sit on Mottle's knee.

He would explain all within hearing range, about world revolution, socialism, universal justice and how in the New World, wars, anti-Semitism, poverty, all suffering, would, as cold winter snows, just melt away, as if they'd never been. Life would be ordered and understood. Life would be as logical as the warmth of the African sun.

"Man is an Animal, we have to tame and control him" he once said. He used to put his strong arms around her narrow waste and the words, words that made no sense to her soothed her and made her feel safe. She would listen feel, rub her nose on his chest and more often than not, fall asleep. "Trotsky said…". She loved that vibration from his chest and throat, as he had taught her his love and fear of mankind.

A love, rejected by mankind, bestowed now, totally, on her little daughter.

The end-of-Autumn drizzle had just started falling.

The daughter was so beautiful. Everybody had told her. She had olive skin – without blemish, large green eyes, and not withstanding the hunger, her three-year-old face was still flesh covered and round. She loved her little plats that would flash around as she span to see something over there. And her fringe still kept cut and tidy. Thumb of right hand often in mouth, hugging-cloth in left, often closely held to her unwashed cheek.

Sorrele loved holding her little hand. She loved seeing the little fingers curve around her thumb. She noticed the same shaped fingers - the same bent little finger - as hers. Sorrele could always feel the sweat and the warmth from those fingers.

She felt this total love in a space just below her rib cage where the soul is kept. The soul, she imagined, kept below the rib cage where it could never be touched or harmed by any evil outside.

And the games – she was so, so clever. She already knew all the pieces of chess and their moves . She loved, however, playing with her dolls more than anything. Truth be told – so did Sorrele. Being hardly twenty, she so much longed for the childhood her daughter's dolls represented, dolls that were hers just yesterday.

Soon, when this is over, she will take the daughter to South Africa – away from here. She too will be a doctor. The best in town. She, with Moshe, will watch together through the clinic door, slightly ajar, and see the admiration on the patients faces.

She will never remember these years . Never. Not even as a nightmare.

She told stories to alleviate her little girls suffering and hunger.

She told her of Africa. She told of Giraffes, Elephants, Deer, Lions. She played a game of the noises each Animal made. They both laughed when the only noise they could think a giraffe could made was, "chomp, chomp, chomp".

Her Mom was sick and got sicker as the days past. Her Mom would give the little food she got to her granddaughter.

"Granny! Granny!" the child would cry, and lie sucking a thumb, hugging her cloth – leaning her head on the tummy of her Granny as she slept on the floor - her head on a cushion of an old lounge settee – they once owned.

Chapter five part six

On the 28th of October, 1941, soon after six o' clock a German bashed his way through the door. She had no immediately family left but for her Mom. The other members of the household had already left. The cousins, the uncles had begged her repeatedly to appear at the square with them or if not, at least, hide as deep as possible. They had seen the Gestapo officers, driving around in their vehicles days before. New ones they hadn't seen before. Something out of the ordinary was happening. They were those who wore skulls on their lapels.
Her uncles loved her but could not help her – they too had problems – they too had children – they too wished to survive.
They had seen the signs posted for three days that everyone in the ghetto had to appear in Democracy Square on the 28th. Her uncles had warned, almost threaten her time and time again of the 28th of October – but she did not hear. The words sounded as if being spoken into a tin can. Hollow, senseless, metallic and meaningless.
There had been a command that all Jews were to assemble at Democracy Square. She was tired of commands and decided that until her husband or Father returned - commands from others would have little interest to her. The only communication she had with her outside world was her own constant chatter with her daughter - Africa, the sun, the jungle, Animals, the profession of medicine and Mottle. And the words repeatedly replied of craving and pining.
She was left alone with her Mom and her daughter when the 28th arrived – alone.

On the 28th of October soon after six o' clock in the morning, a German crashed, bashed through the door and into the relative warmth of their wooden house and started searching the remaining closets for valuables, maybe Jew gold.

Taking into account the number of times this house had been searched for gold and loot, this now reminded her of the Jews scraping the sides of a potato-skin soup pot for the very last possible yet impossible dregs. Grabbing her daughter she scrambled to the corner of the back room.

The black helmeted German crashed through that door too. Her eyes were wide. Her body trembled. She had never seen the skull and crossbones of the Gestapo before. She crouched covering her daughter with both arms.

He kicked her Mom,s head with all the strength he had. He kicked with shiny, so carefully polished steel edged Jackboots. Over and over the soft thuds echoed through the room a thousand times. He left her Mom, a dry rag, on the floor. Her head bent back – blood dripping from her mouth. Dead from "natural causes" they said later. She was so sick, so thin, so weak - she had but a few days to live

He pushed Sorrele, holding her daughter, using a rifle butt, into Krischokaicho Street, where she joined the other Jews walking, shuffeling. From her street, she could see the movement in the light on Panveri street.

Where she to played hopscotch a century back.

Like a dying butterfly she headed towards the light – maybe to avoid another stab of pain, maybe it was just the vacuum behind the moving Jews that pulled this fragment of a girl forward. Girl and child.

She brushed her daughters little fringe once more – she licked her hand and gave her daughter a little face wash and tightened the bows on her plats. It was cold. Just after six o'clock. Mist covering all. Each family walked slowly towards the square. It was something incredibly strange. Both she and her daughter stared at the light through the mist – the shoes of a few Jews that could be seen. She followed these as they turned left into _____ street. Turning right into _____ street she was witness to a scene she could never dream. Thousands upon thousands of shoes all slowly moving towards Democracy square. Each connected to some group. Families. Lovers. Friends. Children gangs. Husbands Wives Grandpas Grandmas.

So many, so many Jews.

When she got there her she nearly choked by her daughter, holding her so tightly. She propped her up a bit and walked as quickly as she could. She tried to keep her own head up but it too kept sinking.
Mist covered the whole ghetto. A light cover of ice covered everything. She breathed in the biting air tainted with the smell of Pine and fallen oak leaves. It was still dark. The sun hadn't even considered rising yet. The street lights dissipating in the mist on contact. She now put her daughter down a second so she could straighten her dress then picked her up once more. A German helmet and rifle shone in the light, way above her. As did her daughter's white hugging cloth and doll.
Sorrele's daughter had had her head on Sorrele's shoulder but now her eyes were open as absorption her new environment began. Immediately Sorrele started talking about the Animals in Africa. The monkeys jumping from tree to tree – holding on only by their tails while examining their food, they were so funny, they peeled oranges just as we used to, but just threw their peels away, very rude! The giraffes with long necks, front legs spread, chewing leaves from the very top, chewing with that funny circular movement. Sorrele made a chewing movement with her mouth, around and around.

Deer, running as if one –feeling both the warmth of kinship and the freedom of the veldt.

Both their heads bent down and Sorrele could see a million shoes all walking in the same direction. There were also stretchers, prams and wheelchairs. They seemed not to be connected to any body – just a million shoes and feet. Even her own feet seem to be disconnected – her body and baby floating.

Sorrele and her daughter were quite squashed by the crowd.

Thirty five thousand.

They slowly walked out of Slobotka to Democracy Square.

There she saw a German, an officer, standing proudly on a mud mound, eating a sandwich, drinking hot coffee. His baton swaying left and right then right again then left. Deafness enveloped her. She moved forward not cognizant of any the arguments of those ahead and behind. Which the line of life – and which that of death never occurred to her. Deafness enveloped her as she moved forward. Deafness but for the voice of her little girl – extracting promise after promise – Africa – family – Dad – Granny – Grandpa - Cousins– food – sun – Animals – clothes – school – dolls – fun – dancing – dreams, dreams, dreams.
Dogs barking
Women wailing
Guns shooting
Men begging
Soldiers commanding
Lithuanians laughing
Old people dying
Children crying
Gestapo lashing
Hassidim praying
God ignoring
Mothers screaming

Chapter five – part four

All she noticed now was the bows on the plats, the shiny brow and the cut of her fringed hair of her daughter – thumb in her mouth and the hugging cloth.
She walked to the left without the need to be shown. She could smell the garlic on the Germans sandwich. He must have such a good wife to make him a tasty meat sandwich so early in the morning. It was so cold. Maybe she prepared it the night before.
As she passed the German her shoes were sucked off by the mud – the feel of cold mud. The mud with shoe imprints – soon gone. She held her daughter as tight as she could and humming a lullaby, bent down and scooped them up not causing the shortest break in her forward movement.
She thought of nothing now but the wood–paneled, thick carpeted waiting- room of her daughter's clinic. Fireplace full of coal and warmth. She would sit there, pretending to be a patient, and listen to what the others had to say She saw some Mothers rocking their prams, waiting for the Doctors examination.

At about noon they started walking slowly towards the small ghetto.

They sat in the road. The dark came so slowly yet intensely. They had moved into one of the empty houses.
One of the women started singing and rocking. No food. No drink. The men

thinking, believing above all beliefs that they were being moved back to the little ghetto.
And as if it was water and palms had miraculously appeared in the desert all the mothers began singing. An oasis. An oasis in the Sinai. Leaderless, the group was now lost. There was no Promised Land and there was no Egypt. No forwards and no backwards. Just the hard, dry sand and the heat of the Sun.
The cries of the babies and young children slowly quieted as the sweetest voices sang and soon all the mothers joined in. The praying, the crying and shouting stopped. All that was heard was the choir of Mothers. Each mother harmonized as if being directed by an unseen conductor. Some of the men came to the door of the house and listened. They too started – clear tenor voices, a deep resonant bass. The songs they hoped would reach the village and the Lithuanians would fall on their knees and facing their damned cross, beg forgiveness. The songs, they hoped, would reach the ears of the Gestapo - they would wake and thinking of their own families, cancel tomorrow's events and pack up their military equipment for the long trek back to the Rhine or where ever.
Their voices did reach their babies and children – and they now slept as if drugged.

They sung, among others the song of that young genius of the Vilna ghetto.

Shtiler shtiler, lomir shvaygn
Kvorim vaksn do.
S'hobn zey farflantst di sonim:
Grinen zey tsum blo.
S'firn vegn tsu ponar tsu,
S'firt keyn veg tsurik.
Iz der tate vu farshvundn
Un mit im dos glik.
Shtiler, kind mayns, veyn nit oytser,
S'helft nit keyn geveyn
Undzer umglik veln sonim
Say vi nit farshteyn.
S'hobn breges oykh di yamen.
S'hobn tfises oykhet tsamen,
Nor tsu undzer payn
Keyn bisl shayn

Friling afn land gekumen
Un undz harbst gebrakht
Iz der tog haynt ful mit blumen
Undz zet nor di nakht
Goldikt shoyn der harbst af shtamen
Blit in undz der tsar;
Blaybt faryosemt vu a mame:
S'kind geyt af ponar.
Vi di vilye a geshmidte
T'oykh geyokht in payn
Tsien kries ayz durkh lite
Itst in yam arayn
S'vert der khoyshekh vu tserunen
Fun der fintster laykhtn zunen
Rayter kum geshvind,
Dikh ruft dayn kind.
Shtiler shtiler s'kveln kvaln
Undz in harts arum.
Biz der toyer vet nit faln
Zayn mir muzn shtum.
Frey nit kind zikh, s'iz dayn shmeykhl
Itst far undz farat
Zen dem friling zol der soyne
Vi in harbst a blat.
Zol der kval zikh ruik flisn
Shtiler zay un hof
Mit der frayheyt kumt der tate
Shlof zhe kind mayn, shlof.
Vi di vilye a bafrayte
Vi di beymer grin banayte
Laykht bald frayheyts likht

Quiet, quiet, let's be silent,
Dead are growing here
They were planted by the tyrant
See their bloom appear.
All the roads lead to Ponar now.
There are no roads back
And our father too has vanished,
And with him our luck.
Still, my child, don't cry, my jewel
Tears no help commands
Our pain callous people
Never understand
Seas and oceans have their order
Prison also has its border
There is no light.

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ring has come, the earth receives her -
But to us brings fall.
And the day is filled with flowers -
To us darkness calls.
Autumn leaves with gold are softened. -
In us grow deep scars,
And a mother somewhere orphaned -
Her child - in Ponar.
Now the river too is prisoner
Is enmeshed in pain
While the blocks of ice tear through her,
To the ocean strain.
Still, things frozen melt, remember,
And cold winds to warmth surreder
Future bring a smile
So calls your child,
So calls your child.

3.
Quiet quiet, wells grow stronger
Deep within our hearts,
Till the gates are there no longer,
No sound must impart.
Child, rejoice not, it's your smiling
That is not allowed
Let the foe encounter springtime
As an autumn cloud.
Let the well flow gently onward
Silent be and dream.
Coming freedom brings your father,
Slumber, child serene.
As the river liberated,
Springtime green is celebrated
Kindle freedom's light,
It is your right.
It is your right!

n gezikht

Chapter five part six

The Lithuanians and Germans barked, shot and whipped and she started the walk.
The Lithuanians and Germans barking, shooting and whipping - she started walking.
The sun had been up a few hours yet the mist was still thick. Some looked back at the ghetto and saw there the loved ones standing –standing absolutely still.
Shocked at the sight.
The route to Fort Nine was a death sentence.
A death sentence typed in the court of humanity by the feet of the condemned.
Condemned for the sin of existence.
Many of the Jews on both sides of the fence had built up all kinds of theories for the separation, for the selection. Many thought that were obviously repopulating the emptied "small ghetto". The ghetto had been through other mass executions before – seven hundred, one thousand. Ten thousand! This cannot be!

So many children! So many babies! It cannot be.

Sorrele had cohabited with death so long. It was with her in the morning and at night. Selection, arbitrary deaths, disappearances. She heard about the hospital being burnt down with patients, nurses and doctors. She heard of orphans caught on the bayonets of soldiers, having been thrown from high windows.

There was always a possibility. Her initial easy compliance turned to panic.

She was not ready. She had so much still to do. She had this daughter. It was essential to be with her as she grows. This is a grotesque mistake.
She looked again at the ghetto. They were standing pointing to this one and that. Holding their heads. Shouting out a name as loud they could.
"Haddasah!!"

"Wait for me, in Heaven; I shall be with you soon my loves, my children. Wait, we'll soon be together."
She saw strong men breaking and falling and strong men holding their heads as if they were to explode.

As if, they were to explode from grief.

She saw strong men sitting, with their heads between their knees crying as if the world had come to an end – as indeed it had.
She now heard a group of men, among themselves, saying Kaddish for themselves, on the strong probability that no one will be left to say Kaddish over them.
What she did not see were the children's prams wheeled back – empty – given as gifts to the Lithuanians by the Germans.
Wheeled back passed the fence so the Fathers could understand.
What she did not see was this huge Jew stand up and like a bolt of lightening charge towards a German guard.
A thousand kilometers away, deep in Siberia three hunters were resting after a days work. Two were preparing tea and a snack, the third watching the bear they had managed to capture. The bear span around in his cage – smashing himself on the wooden bars – trying to get back to the life he lived until not so long ago. The more he span the more frustrated he became. He pushed his spout down and scratched the snow with his paws. He bit the bars. He stood on his hind legs reaching out for the roof. The hunter could not stop laughing – this was a perfect Animal for the circus that had ordered it.
How it happened no one could understand but on one of his frantic jumps he must have moved the lock and the door swung open. Mouth open and spit pouring out – his teeth at the ready – his lips turned back he began an immediate attack. The hunter let off one fatal bullet and then another two to make sure.
The bear fell down not a meter from the hunter.
His body slowly pumping the pain, red, into the snow – rising and lowering, less and less, until it finally stopped. The bear again felt the lost peace. One last snort, the bear again felt the lost peace.

Once again, her fear was being stifled. She heard and felt nothing but the whimpering and warmth of her little girl.
She had wet herself.
"Sorry Mom, I could keep it in – I'm sorry."
The pee was running down over Sorrele's skirt, over her shins and onto her feet. The fact that this probably made the walking even more difficult did not even occur to her. It felt very much like being on train – not much different than the train to the Baltic for a holiday or maybe to visit the family in Vilna.
Looking left and right, she watched the view sliding by –the mocking Christians drawing death signs on their necks, old and young being murdered with gun here and there – with a foot on neck here and there. A baby- held at its ankles - head cracking on a rock or the side of a truck. An old sick lady receiving a whipping by a German or a kicking by a Lithuanian.

All in silence – as in the past, she watched the view pass, through the window of those trains.

She saw too the wonderful trees – they are sure to be here to pleasure those who

The hill slowly inclined towards a huge oak tree and then the Ninth Fort. They arrived. They had arrived.

A jail for her daughter?

It must be a mistake – we are not bad people– her daughter undauntedly said – we shall fix it tomorrow - she whispered to her daughter – yes said her daughter it must be a mistake – these are definitely not bad people – I know them – these are not bad people. She stared into her daughter's eyes – is there anyone more innocent, more fragile, more lovely, more loving, more feeling, more honest that a three year old child – than her three year old child ?

Oh Master Race – take me – burn me alive.

Oh Master Race just not this little girl – for sure she is the child of God himself! Tear me into pieces on a rack but just not this little girl – I am nineteen and do not understand how I may have harmed you - but I trust you that in some way I have. I see your hate – I swear I can't fathom for what, but I beg you – punish me – – I must be the guilty one. Stab me, hang me, shoot me, rape me, skin me alive, behead me and kick it down the hill. I plead guilty to any crime you say.
The little girl – she is innocent – she has not, she could not have caused you harm. Look at her, look at her, Oh Master Race – see the love she has – see her innocence – I beg you , Oh Master Race - let her live.
Suddenly a most powerful Russian accented Yiddish bellowed through the passages of the fort,
"Brothers, Sisters – be brave! We are one. Evil will never triumph. We may all perish – but Jews will be till the end of time and so will justice!"

They heard those jackboots running, then in accented modern Hebrew,

"Zionism! Socialism! Brotherhood of Nations!"

One shot echoed for an eternity and then silence.

He must have been mad – many thought – we are ten thousand – and among us many strong young men – surely there must be another plan.
But then time for plans had passed.
They sat on the concrete bench.
In the huge cell.
Shooting started.
She capped her daughter's ears and whispered loudly about Africa, the Animals.
The screaming the pleading the crying the begging the shouting of the Shma cut off in the middle. So loud. So very loud.

Groups of about a hundred were formed and led outside one after the other. They did not count the babies. Within about seventy-five meters of the fort gates and on the side of a sloping mud hill, they met the previous two groups taken out the fort.

The first group was standing still – naked.

She was surprised there to see all the Jews of the second group in front of her undressing. Germans holding dogs.

Shouting.

Shooting.

Beating.

Killing.

They all heard the shooting.

They all heard the screams of pain and cries for mercy. They all heard the words of Jew-pig and shots. They all heard, "Shma Israel…"

They all heard the Hebrew word "NEKAMA"

REVENGE, REVENGE, REVENGE!

They all heard the thuds of the crowbars and death cries during the lull in the shooting.

It was three in the afternoon when they took Sorrele and her daughter.
Three in the fall.

Sorrele grabbed her daughter. And held her tight. Her daughters thumb went straight for her mouth, grabbed her hugging-cloth and bent her little head down on Sorrele's shoulder

Sorrele's stripped off her daughter's clothes and let hers fall to the ground.

"No Mommy, No!"

"Take me back to Granny – I don't like this"

" Quiet, my sweet darling daughter – we will soon be in Africa" she held her daughters hand, " We will soon see Moshe and his son – and the giraffes, the elephants, the deer, the lions. My darling, my sweet – I promise"

'Not the lions Mommy, not the lions- I'm scared of the lions"

Sorrele sang a lullaby, slowly rocked back and forth - all the time tidying her baby's hair.

Appeared a few Lithuanians with whips and guns and crowbars and began chasing the group with Sorrele holding her daughter a tight as she could, up and over the hill thinking of nothing but her daughter living, living as a famous doctor.

She let out and uncontrollable cry of pain.

" What are you doing, What are you doing. Don't run like this! Don't cry! You are scaring me. Please Mom – don't run like this! I don't want to be here! Let us get back to Grandma! Why are you screaming? Oh Mommy – I love you – don't cry".

The huge pit appeared in front of her. She felt her daughter arm around her neck, her wet buttocks on her arm, her wet bony body on her breasts and stomach. The people behind pushed her to the edge of the pit. She turned around so her daughter would not see the dead, the dying, those who were struggling to crawl out having their heads smashed open by Lithuanian crowbars. The staring corpses of the old and young, the blood and the gore. Sorrele now only heard the desperate sucking of her thumb. Her head was still resting on Sorrele's shoulder watching, through the tears, the German soldier prepare himself – lying on a mat on the ground behind the machine gun. Sorrele bent her knees, crouching slightly forward allowing her daughter's foot to cover as much of her pubic hair as possible. Realizing that life was to be only a few seconds longer, wished now, nothing more than a little dignity.

Their two naked bodies were now as one.

Her hand stroked the wet hair, straightening the bows once last time and tidying her fringe. She heard the sound of her daughter sucking desperately on her thumb and holding her hugging-cloth.

There they stood in total union.

Sorrele's daughter watched with a blank fascination as the German soldier, uniform splashed with blood, cocking the rifle, the meticulously cleaned rifle, aiming carefully through the sites towards her. He his legs spread for better stability, as he was taught. He moved his body – making himself a bit more comfortable, until her head, her wet eyelids, were clear in his sites.

The first bullet entered Sorrele's daughter's head above her left eye –smashing through the cranium, destroying first the frontal left lobe, smashing through the back of the skull like the tumbler at a Jewish wedding, then grazing Sorrele's shoulder.

Sorrele's daughter was killed.

. The second cut her neck.

Sorrele's daughter was killed.

The third broke into her chest and ripped through heart and left lung.

Sorrele's daughter was killed.

Sorrele and her daughter fell backwards together into the pile of naked, broken, smashed, moaning, wet warm corpses, body parts of all shapes and sizes.

Together, as one, they were soon to be covered with other naked, broken, smashed, still moaning, wet warm corpses, body parts of all shapes and sizes and blood. Sorrele could feel her daughter brain seep over her shoulder. She could feel her little body crumble. Sorrele was still alive but had no wish left to live. The Germans had drained all remaining life from this nineteen year old Jewess.

She lay there slowly sinking deeper into the blood and gore of her daughter mixed with the blood of the whole Jewish people.

She could feel others falling on her and the dark soil covering her body. She thanked her God for her death as more bodies and soil covered her. Very soon her mouth was choked tight and her breathing stopped.

She lay in death holding her broken child. Her last thoughts were that related to the wonder of the fusion she felt with her little broken daughter.

Chapter six (a) – *a personal note to my reader*

As you recover from the immediate shock of the above paragraphs – close your eyes for a few seconds – maybe even close the book.
I am a Jew and I am indeed writing about my family. I feel more comfortable writing about those I may have loved. I never forget for a moment, however, my search for love goes way beyond my family, my people.
After a break, maybe a walk outside on the beach with never-ending waves or a quiet park, I want you please to cup your hands over your mouth and chant the following words half through your nose. I want you to create the sound of a "Jaws Harp".
The Jaws Harp is the one of the simplest instruments played by the most simplest of people. Amazingly, it appears on every continent and with peoples who have had, as far as I understand, absolutely no contact ever throughout the ages. What instrument is better to symbolize the essence of humanism?

Lookingfor a runaway floorways hallways law-ways more-ways whore-ways foreplay Norway looking for a railway mail-way break-away sail-away letus-play whata day have-to-stop the moaning rowing groaning loaning gloating foaming flowing loading glowing cawe starta eating feeding beading reading meeting seeding breeding teething leading heating morning boring snoring clawing meeting beating cheating ratatat matatat blackened-hat hat-on-rack lady-falls in-the-gore baby- singing never-more.

It was a chilly yet beautiful autumn morning, the dew was still on the pine trees in the forests of Kovna near where they had used three bullets to kill Sorrele's daughter.

Just three bullets
In the autumn.

The Oak, leaves now falling, remained for the next generation to see.

Truth be told, nothing of great importance had happened in the world at large. A little girl and her mother had been killed much as vermin are. There had been no chance of escape – they were condemned at birth.

A strange incurable genetic quirk.

A huge dark purple sheath moved slowly encompassed the whole area. The sun darkened until nobody could see clearly.
First over the killing ground, then the ghetto, into the Old City then in the Center.
It was told that the whole country was covered and possibly the whole world.
Many discussions have been had whether this cloud resulted from the death of Sorrele's daughter, the four thousand two hundred and seventy three children other children or the million Jewish children destroyed during this time.
As the very last participant was covered, the spherical spinning image of yellow and orange appeared at a great height producing great light and warmth.

Chapter six (b) – *another personal note to my reader*

Please repeat as you had done before. However this time as you chant, imagine my arms around your neck and my cheek on yours. Feel my warmth, the love I have for you. Each word you have read is a spade digging deeper into my soul and you have dug so far, I have to call you brother/sister. Each word I write a bolt joining our hearts. Can you feel my tears mingling with yours? Yes, my dear reader, we are humanity, we are love. We are as one - Sorrele and her daughter – one for ever and ever.

ratatat matatat blackned-hat hat-on-rack
ratatat matatat blackned-hat hat-on-rack

Looking fora runaway floorways hallways law-ways more-ways whore-ways fore play Norway canit be a railway mail-way break-away sail-away there we'll stopa moaning rowing groaning loaning gloating foaming flowing loading glowing letus-play whata day can we starta seeding breeding teething eating feeding beading reading meeting leading heating snoring morning boring clawing cheating beating, rowing, fouling, bowing –

orr-eee-
ooa-ayyy-owww-
oorr eeeee

(to reader: remove hands)

ratatat matatat blackned-hat hat-on-rack lady-falls in-the-gore baby- singing, never-more.
baby- singing baby- singing never-more, baby- singing, never-more.

They had used three bullets to kill Sorrele's daughter.
Just three
In the fall

Chapter seven

From the heap of corpses rose the loudest scream that has ever yet been heard.

A scream muffled the accumulated noises of rattling machine guns, barks of the dogs and soldiers, the cold laughter of the locals.

It was the scream of pain

The pain of a loss

The loss of life that was not to be had.

The scream of she, who would never grow to be a young woman.

Who would never grow to be a young woman Who would never feel a lover penetrating her depths,

Who would never feel the lips of lust,

Who would never dance naked, on the beach before a fire .

Who would never smell the kelp and salt water,

Who would never hear the sound of waves,

Who would never discover the miracle of creation.

Who would never worship the Sensuality of Existence.

Who would see neither Giraffes...nor Elephants...nor Deer...nor Lions.

And then there was silence.

The guns continued and Jews kept falling.

They had used three bullets.

Then.

In the middle of this Greuse-Aktion.

After the silence and the ravenous guns waited the next layer of Jewish flesh

The scream of Sorrele's daughter rose gently through the pile naked corpses now covering her little broken body .

.The scream of Sorrele's daughter rose gently from the depths of these corpses, piled one on the other, over her broken tiny body.

The scream of Sorrele's daughter pushed its way from the depths of that pit, pushed itself passed all these dead and dying corpses, through the blood and the gore into the cool misty October Lithuanian Morning, reaching into the warmth of heaven.

From the depths of hell that found itself on earth, Sorrele's daughters scream rose slowly towards the warmth of heaven.

Three bullets.

Three

Chapter eight part three

After the shooting and killing, when the Germans were packing up, stripping their weapons, cleaning out the residual carbon and carefully oiling, the working parts, their pants soaked in blood, getting ready to return to camp for a warm supper, with maybe beer and song. Professional killers.

After the clubbing and killing, the Lithuanians were off to the pubs to meet their wives, drink and anecdote each other.

It was then that a huge, purple, twisting cloud sheathed slowly over the hills, over the farmland, and darkened the whole killing area and slid slowly down the road, over the Ghetto and into the Old City then the Center.

Wherever the shadow appeared all life and movement stopped. Through gaps in the flickering purple cloud could be noticed a bright orange color changing in shape sometimes allowing extremely bright yellow points to stream down. And behind all this, maybe as the result of the intensity of the light, very occasional slivers of black emptiness appeared.

The twisting sheath moved back over the killing field and through this could be seen the broken, torn body of Sorrele's daughter rising – rising slowly – on her own – towards heaven. Eyes shut tight by her wide open mouth screaming the scream of innocent non – complicity.

My Sweet Reader I feel your soul molding with mine.

My Sweet Reader I feel you - my words on your pages binding our hearts. Please, you should not allow your tears to fall for Sorrele 's daughter alone. Nor, this time anyway, allow your tears fall not for the inhumanity of man to man – something that we have slowly, unfortunately seem to have accepted, the cannibals we are.
Your tears I wish, at this time anyway, to fall only for man 's inhumanity to child. Something that we, both you and I, will refuse to accept.

Yet there it was.

It happened.

Chapter eight part three – a clarification

Why was it that only Sorrel's daughter screamed? Why didn't I conjure a scene where all the little children screamed the scream of loss? I indeed did consider this. I could have indeed, but there were two things that had me write as I did. Very, very few children, maybe one in a million, have to my knowledge, the privilege of screaming the scream of their future loss.
These children were put there to prevent it being said that not ALL children after death were quiet so acceptable of futures destroyed. We the living would never be able to accept every child rejecting a destroyed future – on the other hand we also could never accept a situation where all children accept premature death.

One in a million is thus allowed that special cry.

The way they are treated in heaven, the private angel, the quiet corner, the enormous amount of love, compassion, warmth, may have created the impression that they accept losing all – for this reason one in a million or so, are allowed the privilege of that scream.
And of course, in this case, Sorrele's daughter was after all part of my family and as the writer I can, let's say, "hedge the bet" a bit towards her.

But of course, she could well have been yours.

Chapter nine part one

Then came this particular autumn morning, when Sorrele's daughter was killed by three bullets. Three.

Her screams arrived at heaven before her soul. All activities stopped. The jabbering of the Clients could not be heard above the screams. There could be no bargaining – no bickering. Even God was seen holding two giant hands over his ears. All were waiting for the piercing scream of the little girl to abate. It never did.

She appeared. Mouth so wide that her eyes were forced closed by her bright red cheeks. The screams of the little girl filled the vast halls of heaven. Everything came to a dead stand still and worst of all, no Client could perform any function, whether to bargain his way in or whether simply to rest a while, as was the will of most.

The Child-angels flew around her, danced around her. Stroking her gently with the soft fur undersides of their wings – they tried desperately to quiet her, to get her to accept her new status of child-Client. They tried nudging her slowly towards the "Children corner." Nothing helped. They offered her all the bribes children are offered to perform some unwelcome task. Nothing helped.

Her very own special angel stood aside, arms folded, simultaneously losing patience yet fully understanding the horrendous source of the problem.

Sorrele had promised Giraffes, Elephants and wonderful husband - and she just would accept nothing less. She was promised that she would become a famous doctor. It wasn't an arbitrary promise – it was the promise of her Mother – and that was non-retractable.

God mumbled to himself that he had once before, during the course of eternity, heard such a scream but not being so good with time, could neither remember when it was, nor by whom it was done, nor, worst still, what he had been done about it.

He surely couldn't punish a little girl who lost her life who had lost all she had hoped for – yet he had all his Clients to consider. And with punishment out of the question what was to be done. They had come here to rest in peace – and worse still, he himself, could not concentrate on other Godly Matters.

He summoned (by hand – no one could hear above the scream) all his angels and Glerks.

"Send her back, " barked God, crouching behind his throne, "LET HER LIVE! Let's make a miracle - we haven't had a miracle for some time now. WE NEED A MIRACLE".

"We c-c-cant", said the chief Glerk, crouching almost on top of him and pointing at his Client list headed -

'Kovna –1941, 29th October. Sub-section – Young Innocent Children'.

"Her little b-b-body has been b-b-broken into pieces, b-b-buried under thousands of other destroyed and b-b-broken b-b-bodies.

" God ... Sir this is a very special c-c-case. They call it the 'F-F-Final Solution' down there. God, I'm terribly sorry, it is one of those 'Absolute Cases'. This is one of those cases where she has been 'condemned by existence' – her very being has c-c-condemned her to death at birth. If one looks through history all similar events have always had an escape hatch, a little hope that could allow for a miracle. A change of belief or even hiding belief, c-c-crossing a border, f-f-fighting back, bribing the hangman, something, something The condemnation here Sir, is so f-f-final that even you, Sir, cannot reverse it."

The Chief Glerk hoped he had got all the planned words out and then suddenly, typically of his sort, blurted without considering where and with whom he was.

"They call themselves the chosen – I have often thought if they had realized for what they had been so chosen."

God knowing his staff well, just mumbled through his thick beard,

"I chose them."

The Glerk stepped back and this time he mumbled,

"Next time maybe You choose should some other People".

It was a new twist to an old joke but realizing what he had just blurted and to whom it was blurted, was for a moment thankful that the screams of the child covered most sounds.

God in the mean time was getting a little flustered. Maybe even a little more than a little flustered. Not only were his immediate staff beginning to look at him with mordant stares but, Glerks, Clients, Observertrators – in fact all the occupants of heaven seemed to be staring back at him in disdain, and the early scratches of contempt, demanding an immediate solution. They had nothing against the little girl, quite the contrary, but to continue with their tasks a certain degree of tranquility and order was required.

God also needed to maintain control of the situation. His image and stature must never be demeaned.

"How can it be that I the Holy Lord – the most powerful of all" he thought to himself, "can't find an instant, simple, solution for this simple problem".

"Where is my Organizer when I need him?" Gods booming voice reached the outer boundaries of heaven.

Chapter nine part two

Truth be told – God has never had the need of an Organizer. God, after all, always regarded himself as the Supreme Organizer. It was, far more probable, that the Organizer needed God.

Truth be told, the position of Organizer was the sole idea of the Organizer himself.

He was thus flabbergasted that God had known of him at all!

The Organizer had been mainly preparing himself for the slim chance that he may be needed later. He had heard how warm and comfortable it was in the center but as his organizational skills were so coned and being very aware of the heavenly "non-time" issue, he decided to stick around a while. There was always the chance of a yet better opportunity. He certainly had no trust in anyone's assessment of the situation but his own. He had an ever-present fear that notwithstanding all his skills he may be not allowed in – or worse get stuck between walls. He decided thus to learn of as many Clients, their professions, histories and skills. He kept a strict track of each one so he could find them if and when the occasion arose. He was sure that if anything specific was called for, he was the right person who could fulfill the need.

One could always see him rushing hither and dither – way overweight for his height – sweating furiously – wheezing more than talking – hands continuously flaying in all directions - hair falling over face in the same wild way he was dressed. Constantly writing 'points to remember' in various files he carried around wherever he went and, of course, destroying 'points to remember' when he wished to forget. He ran seven diaries of various categories and an eighth that co-ordinate the other seven.

One immediately noticed that his shoes were worn out, his pants missing buttons and the back of his shirt out and flayed. Every item of clothing undersized enhancing further his bulging appearance. He had for years purchased the same sizes – never accepting his enlarged girth. Dressing was important to him, as he had to appear as "one of the crowd" while chatting to a Client while always ready, at the drop of a pin, to meet with the Supreme Being.

Actually he was virtually in the same state of 'disrepair' as the Observertrators. They, of course had little interest in clothes, their mess was because they either had forgotten some part of their clothing somewhere and – anyhow - did not see much point dressing up and looking smart. They had never planned to be Observertrators and indeed would rather be anything, but anything else!

One Observertrator actually followed the Great Lord around until it was discovered he was trying to teach himself to be God! The laughing was so great that he tried to escape back to earth in order to try rebirth!

Often as not the Observertrator had left his one shoe down there or "by the third door on the left" but was too embarrassed to ask permission to go down for a second time to fetch it and anyway it was too much of a bother and anyway why would he need another shoe and anyway there was always a tomorrow.

The Organizer did see the point but really did not have a moment to spare. He needed to be absolutely ready when his services were called for. Also, and probably equally important, was the sight of him rushing from one side of heaven thus preventing the Glerks from asking too many questions. He figured that if he could possibly gain some extra points before the Glerks realized he had far overstayed his permitted sojourn and thus get a ruling in his favor from God if any dispute did arise.

"Where is my Organizer?" God boomed through the vast halls of heaven. The voice of the Maker frightened all into a deadly silence.

All that was heard was the Organizer emphazimatically interviewing a newly arrived lady - parachutist still holding a piece of broken cord, trying to convince her to, maybe, try her hand at tight-rope walking.

And of course, the cries – the penetrating cries of Sorrele's daughter.

He rushed across to the Lord who was now holding Sorrele's daughter on his lap. It had become obvious that she had wet his thigh and the leg of the throne.

"So do something already" – his old, white, wrinkled hand, stroking her matted hair.

"The world is in a terrible mess, as you may have noticed and we can't think or take any responsible decision - her cries being so unbearable. We cannot to allow the pain of one little girl interfere with the running and the planning of the entire universe. I have not even had the opportunity to organize greater Client accommodation required at this time of history - the lines are growing to intolerable lengths. Maybe put on a show. Make her, maybe to get distracted a while. I have to think, I have to make a plan."

The Organizer startled and frightened out of his wits blurted, "Yes Sir, distraction is my forte – I am your perfect distracter."

He was talking but his brain was rushing over all the possible ways his Supreme Being could have received intelligence of his arrival. He concluded that this was beyond all rational thought.

Realizing that what he had what he had said made little sense and what sense it made should be removed from the protocol!

The Organizer waved his hands above his head – to the left and then to the right. Immediately there appeared drummers. The first drummer on each side approached keeping time for a column of drummers and each player's drum bouncing on his thigh as he marched.

He ran down, as far from God as he could, clapping his hands at unseen Clients here and snapping his fingers at others there. Shouting instructions into the echo of previously shouted instructions. Only those trained to anticipate such instructions could comprehend what was being expressed.

Very soon appeared a troop, rather an army of buglers, trumpeters, bassoonists, trombonists, all marching towards the throne . They were dressed in a hundred colors and a thousand patterns all playing the same stirring tune . On both sides of this massive column approaching were the drummers. RAT TAT RAT TAT TAT TAT . Kettle drums, Cymbals, flutes, all held in the military way that such smartly dressed soldiers do So many armies. So many colors. Blue, red, green, purple. Black hats with chinstraps. Brown peak hats with shiny badges. Boat hats with feathers. Berets with pom-poms. Uniforms, smart uniforms from all over the earth. There were African soldiers wearing masks. Red Indians with feathers. Peruvians playing their drums and Pan flutes.(They were apparently trying to get to a concert in Argentina, in an old plane and didn't make it over the Andes.)

Sorrele's daughter was now standing on Gods lap – her one arm around his neck, her scream blanked by the military bands. Her interest obviously directed towards the goings on – whose wouldn't be?

It was soon very clear that all this military music, all this performance was but a screen to distract their eyes from what was happening further back. Hundreds of Observatrators under the direction of the Organizer were pushing, pulling, with their hands, and using a worn rope that seldom slid smoothly over the continuously sticking pulleys one of the huge Constraintures. Having well schooled, the Organizer managed to get a huge lever and they slowly moved one of those concentric ringed sections closer to where God and the little girl were sitting. Naturally a few Observatrators started pushing the wrong way but quickly corrected themselves – hoping no one had noticed. Non-Clients still base themselves on the sizes familiar on Earth so it is difficult to explain the size. Without exaggeration, it could be said it was infinity long and infinity wide. I would.

The army bands disappeared into the distance as five hundred Japanese Daiko gong players appeared. They were dressed only in pants and had obviously been practicing as their upper bodies were completely covered in a shimmering sweat. They stood in one row all looking at Sorrel's girl and then together, with absolute precision hit their huge Daikyo gongs three times. BOOOOOIng ... the "nng" did not stop as from behind the gongs appeared a few bright orange colored Tibetan "Godly gong" players gently rubbing the edges of the bowl-like gongs – producing the same gentle sound as the end of the Japanese gongs "nng". The two groups smiled at each other. Two groups of eastern musicians were finding each other after an eternity. Both at peace. Then again BOOOOOING – NGGGG!! And again, and again. A ten thousand Chinese Universal drums CRASHED as the drummers span around and entered the scene.

As they BOOOOOINGed and NNNNGGGed and CRASHED, the huge barrel slowly opened . The sight was just too much to absorb. This obviously was the Musical Category and it was amazing. Thousands upon thousands of musicians stretching from eternity to eternity. And even higher than that. Each musician on his little platform. It seemed as if each one either was smiling or trying hard to restrain his smile. None of them ever imagined they would ever have another chance at playing their instrument.

It had obviously been decided not to use any intricate melody that may not be appreciated by any specific group. The music thus swung slowly between universal love of percussion to the universal love of wind instruments. Always in

precisely as the high-pitched Irish whistler and Dalisma. Not a second passed as they quieted when thousands upon thousands of violinists, cellos, double basses, played a massive crescendo – then abruptly stopped. All eyes were now on the single Zimbabwean Ebara player. TONG TONG TING TING TUNG TUNG TING TONG over and over. Initially most other players had a slight supercilious attitude toward him. Such a simple African peasant. Slowly they began to feel the beauty and love of nature spreading, spreading, spreading. An Indian Karala Trivandum drummer kept in rythym with him DUKADUKADUKADUK.., in the background the quiet hum of a million choirs completed the musical flash – until the same exact split second Two Afghanistan Du-duk players stood up. They were situated about center of the structure but their sad, shatteringly sad music flowed down a thousand floors. The sadness became a little unbearable at lower levels. After a while, as if massaging the away the pain that caused the sadness came the soft humming of choirs, opera virtuosos, together with a huge, very huge organ –one that God was particular pleased to hear every now and again on Saturday and other heavenly holidays when all rested.

With all the power exuded by the organ one expected some negative effect on the other organ players – with their usual bloated critical egos. Instead they jumped – platform to platform until they were all standing around the organ – cowboys in a western bar around the honky-tonk piano!

It was noticed electric guitar bands – one after another started appearing. It was a well-known fact that the players of blues band players arrived here young. I am sorry to say that the drugs had a large part of their presence but many simply incorrectly connected electrical parts of their guitars. They played loud and fast as a contra to the sad Armenian music. A spot light picked out way, way on top, a female blues singer – dressed in sparkling tight green outfit dancing to the music. She lifted the mike to her mouth and to everyone's consternation –sang so badly – so out of tune – words blurred into some unbelievably accented blurp. All the players stopped without order – many clapping both hands over their ears. The Organizer, his face pained, together with the Chief Glerk bounded to the top to talk to her.

A small Observertrators asked the Good Lord, " How did she get here? She surely must have had to go through a number of doors to be accepted into this category?"

"Not everything is perfect in Heaven. What? Did you think heaven was perfect? Maybe just by strength of will or maybe some special favor she did for a Glerk – who knows?"

The Observertrator after a few seconds needed for processing, let out what could be best be described as a "childish giggle".

The singer, in the middle of a temper tantrum, threw her mike onto the floor then, head and shoulders turned down, lips pouting, headed for the door of the section. It was thought that she was seen making a rude sign at all in heaven including the Almighty before disappearing, maybe into a more appropriate category. The orchestras and choirs tried a bit of Verdi's Requiem. A strange peace of music to have been played there, one that makes every soul so sorry for the condition they now found themselves.

. All beautifully performing again in harmony. Harmony that maybe could only really be found in music. All arranged by the Organizer in advance "in case of need".

Clowns carrying bright yellow flowers. Not traditional sad painted clowns – just ones with painted happy smiling mouths.

The drums were now going at what can be called a hysterical pace - sweat pouring off the players. There on each level stood singers holding electric guitars. They were even louder and more full of energy than even the drums. Wowooowowooowowooooooowow. Together with the drums tshukar-tshukar-doff-doof.

Over and over and over and over and over. Louder and louder.

The beat was so intense that God rocking the child almost dropped her – her wet bottom on his arm, screaming although the screams could now not be heard over all the music and entertainment.

Her eyes now fixed on the clown.

Slowly she lowered her head on Gods long white robed shoulder. .Her eyes half closed. She started sucking hard on her thumb using his robe as a security blanket.

The sound of two choirs - two huge choirs - one from heaven and one from earth both began the same beautifully integrated chant. Often, such music that when sung by the living, had been said, was created as if in heaven. In this case, the beauty was so great that the Lord made a very rare exception and allowed it to rise and twin with music in heaven itself. Slowly the music faded and ended.

The artists involved in the entertainment, all the staff in heaven, Glerks, Observatrators, the Organizer, the Clients and of course God himself let out three separate gasps.

The first for the accomplishment of the Organizer - the silence that finally enveloping heaven and earth during such a sad period of history.

The face of the Organizer was seen to shine as if a new sun had been created.

The second gasp went up as they noticed the extraordinary beauty of the little girl. The olive skin, green wet, wet eyes, the long fingers intended for piano playing or maybe gentle doctoring, the long legs linked to her short narrow body - so exquisite - notwithstanding the skin and bone - her head still bent over on Gods white robe.

A third gasp went up when all noticed the dried blood on her shoulders, on her head, in her hair, on her legs. The black soil and dirt on her face mixed with snot and sweat and dried gore.

The souls of Heaven started a slow clap that slowly culminated into a tumultuous cheer and a 'Hallelujah!'

She shivered.

God briefly stood up and with his free hand tried to quiet the Clients and staff and musicians. She straightened herself - standing on his lap. God could be seen looking desperately at the souls and then at the Organizer - simultaneously mouthing "Shu, shu, shu, shu''. Too late.

She slipped her thumb out, opened her mouth and screamed a scream that expressed all the anguish she felt in her heart. Her eyes closed, mouth opened wide, her body and hands shook.

At this stage with a slight nod Organizer the seemingly electronic, computerized, pneumatic contraption closed all the various heavenly circular sub- sections. It floated around that same forbidden area. Who is allowed in here; that I will have to leave to your imagination and intuitive intelligence.

All that could heard now, was left of the music episode was one tall, beautiful, Sax player, muffled by the closed Constrainture, totally absorbed in the slow blues that she had been playing simply continued playing ignoring where she was – and no one felt like stopping her.

She had long black hair streaming over her frown and breasts. She had been blowing around – searching for the soul. She had spent her entire life looking for the soul and knew that somewhere in the depth of jazz, it was sure to be found. What she called the "ultimate soul", what she called "ultimate feeling, ultimate

Discovering none she allowed the Sax to slowing die – packed it – and prepared herself for the long wait, maybe to find soul elsewhere. She knew where there was no soul she would not find her love.

The eyes and expectations of others didn't affect Sorrele's daughter. The pain was hers and hers alone. The fact that others. Oh, so many others, had experienced similar pain had no bearing on her. She saw the thousands of eyes – heard the millions of gasps. These were all over there - out there. She stood on Gods lap, put her arms around his neck and started little jumps and screamed the screams of a little girl who had been so unjustifiably punished.

a personal note to the reader

The above paragraphs were written late at night. I have been turning over in my bed. My pillowcase wet. Sleep, notwithstanding the silence that fills my street, as far from me as the moon from the sun.

I am the creator here. The reason for this writing was the inability of me to contend with my own history and environment. I thus had made a clear decision that I shall create my own. An environment where I shall decide who is to live and who is to die.

In a few pages I have reached a stage where not only the whole of earth and heaven but God himself has been created by me . Not only created but created in a way that with presses of a few computer buttons I should be able to eternally delete them, as if never having ever existed or changed to create a totally different series of events and powers than intended.

I read over what I've written. Is this I writing? Is this I the manic cynic? The manic cynic – who in the typical Tel-Avivian style of sardonic humor, laughing at all. Enjoying the present for all its got to give. Forgetting the past and the future and is sober to the events that can never be changed. The Tel- Avivian who never looks back over his shoulder. The Tel-Avivian who continuously, desperately searches over the Mediterranean – desperately trying to see the outline of Europe and maybe, just maybe, even America!.

To think that God is in my power- on the tips of my fingers! To think the tears even of the little girl are in my power! The design and functioning of heaven! To think that I have here achieved a level of such omnipotence is bewildering.

Yet another power has overtaken me. Why or how this happened, I cannot tell. Initially this was to have been a poem of emotions – an experiment.

There are periods where my brain is spinning off in all other directions yet my fingers keep typing – as if an inner force pushes, forces them along. Can it be that I am losing the new situation I was to create and control – and maybe some inner force is creating an environment out of my control? I shall continue – I am forced to continue- just a while longer.

Chapter nine part three

The Organizer was next seen standing quietly, holding a bulging traveling bag (files overflowing on each side) in the queue in front of a door leading to the heaven of Organizers. He sheepishly looked back head down at God and girl. Only God noticed the slight smirk as their eyes met. Obviously, the usually excellent Organizer that he was, had already arranged for himself other pursuits on the other side of the door and the doors to follow. The door entry system having been, apparently kept as a sort of back up. He knew – unlike others , exactly what he intended to accomplish at all levels towards the center.

Maybe even this whole episode – including the scream of the girl at the end, had been planned in advance.

"Maybe we will use that old well tried solution"

"Which is?"

"Let's turn her into a Bimkom until her wailing stops or have a respite from this wailing until we find a solution. I need time to find a solution so we can all get back to thinking and planning events and so on and so forth."

"Sir, you created Bimkoms as a solution to Clients possessing some "categorial" problem. I remember your instructions that where could not decided a category or a Client apparently has multiple categories we could use the "Bimkom" system."

"Anyway how can we turn her into a Bimkom – she is a child – she has no category". Said the second in command Main Glerk, sniggering, as second-in-command tend to do. "Bobbermeisis, how could a three year old become a Bimkom?"

"Answering the second question first" , Said God, " I thought you were far enough into this book to understand that her death was so cruel – it must have been warranted for something. She must have some category somewhere hidden in her soul!"

"As for the first question peace and quiet for all our Clients – and peace and quiet for M e – I certainly can't see Myself doing any momentous tasks with that continuous wailing!"

After a few long minutes of an acerbic break in conversation, and realizing that God was about to ramble into his long diatribe of Him being all-powerful and that He did certainly didn't need to answer anybody's questions the third in charge - standing at the back called out,

"It's not for nothing they call You God. You are brilliant!"

"Stop yapping already and find Me a fine, strong, young man who can carry her and make sure he is of the Chosen People – I have not the time to go and choose another " – his eyes piercing through the corneas of the Chief Glerk! He in fact had used a Bimkom and maybe the sound of Mozart's requiem had brought him to remember. Mozart had died before finishing. It was not with a little pleading that God had allowed him down to finish it within another's head. God never regretted the decision.

Chapter Nine – Part one

Gabi didn't love his Mom – he adored her. She was always so busy rushing, rushing, rushing with little Gabi hanging precariously on to her belt, at her back. He never ever understood exactly where they were going in that little green Morris Minor, his head plastered on the rear triangular window. He always found himself in fascinating places as his Mom went about on her tour of factories around Cape Town, Coca-Cola suppliers, wholesale vegetable market, clothing wholesalers – where he was span around a few times after clothes had been fitted, begged for never to be used cricket bats and chicken abattoirs, where his Mom would choose a live chicken for the Friday meal . Gabi would close his eyes (and peek) as the chicken was disposed of for this purpose. Children always laughed at the plucked clean, headless body doing that final death run – even at this age Gabi didn't think it funny .

Maybe it was the speed of her travel and surprise of all the places that gave Gabi the need to physically hold on – both for security and for that wonderful body warmth and special perfume she exuded.

The events of Europe were very seldom mentioned or if they were – very quietly. They were so grotesque that that they were hidden far from the children, very much as pornography would be. Many tears flowed over those years . Gabi soon believed that tears were part of the Yiddish language and crying very much part of Yiddish song. Those events slowly became a massive wall separating him from the outside world.

He wondered around always looking for someone on this side of the wall. Searching for someone on this side of the wall he could play with like those over the other side. Pulling himself to the top of the wall he saw how they laughed and ran and played and gossiped with one another. Occasionally he tried pulling himself over but more often than not, was pushed back hard, just as he began. In compulsory cricket he stared at the clouds and was hit on his head by the ball. In

even when there was no ball. He sat on the steps and eating his peanut butter and honey sandwich wondering what they were saying in the groups they formed. And the thrashings over and over, by all concerned.
Often, even at a very young age, did Gabi wish to simply switch off . The pain of living was too great to bare. He knew his Dad and Mom loved him but always so disappointed in him. The pain of despondency when Mom saw those blue lines on his bum in the bath.

There was only one reason to keep him going. One.

A little girl, a cousin, not much younger than himself, rejected not by a group of children, rejected not by parents, rejected not by the schooling staff. Rejected by humanity in its entirety. Accepted only into the soul of Gabi.

As the wall was always seen in its entirety, the bricks were never pointed out– thus never did anyone, including himself, notice the bricks.

Chapter nine part two

They lived in a wood-shingled-roofed house with extreme polished floors, extreme trimmed garden within which were all kinds of fruit trees. Loquart trees were his favorite–he loved climbing – and chomping and spitting out the pits as far as he could – and occasionally watch his Dad – wearing extreme shiny shoes - actually peel loquat using a sharp pen knife. Gabi didn't think of life as good – he could not imagine life being other than it was. He was, after all, only eight years old. He loved and hugged his fat nanny Martha who loved him too. His imagination developed as the years went by. All objects expressed themselves as living beings. He loved the laughter of his Mom as he described the happy , sad , cross, suspicious ,grumpy motor cars according to the design of their radiators. He tried unsuccessfully to make parachutes from sheets , nearly breaking his leg as he fell of the garage , or rockets from matches, burning the kitchen door, or speed boats out of cane , sunk, in fact the only really successful invention was a mulberry juice squasher made out of an old herring barrel and producing delicious mulberry juice with a taint of herring to it.

Even at this stage his social skills were a wacky but really never noticed being so busy reading all thirty-six volumes of The World Book of Knowledge including the index. He never thought about it much as most social events were mainly related to the Prespeterian Church, dominant in the area. His Mom and Dad were Yiddish-speaking Jews from Lithuania. Very few others of this type had chosen to live in this area.. His Mom – an orphaned girl – had found her "once a lifetime true love" in the Pine forests of Kovna during some Yiddish Socialist picnic. His Dad. That feeling of relief, trust and once more being cared for – that feeling of love – always returned when breathing in the smell of Pine. She thus couldn't consider buying in any other place but Pinelands – an English suburb built in a Pine forest. She also cared for the Royal family. His Dad was so clever and so kind. Only when she was close to him did she slow down. He always imagined his Mom hanging on, and looking up, to his Dad as he did his Mom. He laughed imagining his whole family – each hanging onto the back of the older member by the belt.

He always gave a clearer, sharper picture to events that were unfolding.

Chapter nine part three

As the letters had started arriving and the stories of the violent deaths of their families appeared a dark purple cloud of depression overtook them. Loneliness. Gabi's Dad slowly realized that he was the only one left of his large family. Sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, all gone. All destroyed. All gone. All dead.

The word "murdered" never used , conjuring up unbearable images of the violence bestowed on those precious beings he loved. The most inconceivable thoughts arrived – uncalled for - . His Dad – His Mom – gone – dead.

A tiny thought-scratch of his Dad being pushed naked into a gas chamber brought

The only relief was the warmth of Mom.

She held him as he shook with pain.

Dad felt her arms surround him – hold him – give him

All

The love she had to give.

Her soul below her rib-cage

Entwined with his

And thus Gabi was conceived

Absolute love

Absolute grief

Mom felt the deep sobs

As Dad inside her

Ejaculated life of his

Into Moms womb

Mom gave all

As before Dad had - to her

His orphaned love.

So was Gabi conceived.

Chapter nine part four

It was decided after a lengthy deliberation between the Glerks that a number of Observatrators would be sent the world over to find the most perfect vessel to hold the soul of the little girl until God – the Supreme Organizer, (a new name that he fancied and decided to try for awhile) with a quietness prevailing could find some more permanent solution. It was a created task, yet nevertheless, happily accepted by the Observatrators. They were happy at both feeling they were doing something of worth and happy that they were away from Heaven for a while. There was no specific plan that they could never have handled. Indeed, specific plans could not be regarded their forte.

They thought, collectively, that one is usually surprised on returning after some time away- about some radical change. This could be – they thought collectively – possibly a door, a new category for Observatrators!

One Observatrator, often quite sometimes, in fact quite a lot of time, tramping all

girl's soul should be stored would be within her own family. Looking for Lithuanian Jews from Kovna living in Cape Town should have been a simple task. It wasn't. Every time he met one –and being what he was – found himself buying property and receiving a mortgage of one hundred and twenty per cent the value. After a while he found the address he wanted, took good cover and observed the goings on in Gabi's family. He was excited that finally he at last had something important to jot down.

The Observatrator, the same one we had met before, by the way, soon recognized the brother Moshe learning the art of medicine – this plus the strength and acumen of Gabi made him just about sure that this was it.

He waited behind the thick curtains those filthy, torn shoes sticking out the bottom – yet unnoticed. He felt the exuberance of having taken on this job of God's sleuth.

Chapter ten part two

Gabi was lying on his Moms bed, soft. Outside Peter the Xhosa gardener was singing that what sounded like a Xhosa tribal lullaby pushing the lawn mower back and forth. The smell of cut green grass streaming through the open bay window, carried by the sunshine.

Who is this, and who is this? Gabi holding the thick black photo album. His Mother bent over towards her three winged mirror finishing the touches to her powdering her cheeks, came to lie next to him. "...this is your Uncle Yosef he was shot". "...this is your Grandpa Zundel" he was gassed in Dachau". Slowly the names and relationship faded away. All was heard were the handed down death sentences. "... he was burnt alive", " ... she was hung .... " shot, drowned, stoned, starved, bayoneted, thrown out a top window , and many, so many "we don't knows". He heard his nanny Martha in the kitchen preparing a Saturday chicken and roast potatoes.

As she was talking Gabi pulled a photo of a little girl out of the corner paper-holders. "She's your cousin – Sorrele's daughter, she was shot in the Greuse Aktion in '41, the Germans took 10, 000 Jews from the Ghetto, half of them children, and shot them into a pit, dug near a fort at the edge of town and shot them."

His Mom voice faded as did Peters mowing and Martha's cooking. He found himself entering the photo.

"Du binst miner couzina?'' he said. A reply wasn't necessary. He saw a shorter, girl-version of himself!

"Zicher", pulling his hand causing him to fall on a wooden floor. "Are you the one from South Africa?... My mother says we are going to join you and we are going to see wonderful Animals... is it true the sun shines there while the clouds are here?"]

"Is it true Lions smile...I've seen pictures of Lions and they smile – tell me, tell me all", but before he could say a word she dragged him up the road. She moved so fast. She moved like the wind. She got to a hay stack, pulled him up and they jumped together again and then again, her thick black hair blousing up accept where covered by a red cloth – " Are you going to show me the giraffes? They must be so clever as they see everything – right?" .

" Gabriel, you must keep me warm – I feel a cold wind coming – I need your warmth"

"I can hear my Mom calling me I better go. I keep getting into trouble!" She

The Observatrator realized that the address he had arrived at was correct.

He rushed, as fast as the winds would take him. Creating a wind and having tears pouring sideways through the muck on his face.
After being lost a while – a condition he was quite familiar with – he finally got to location in heaven he was most familiar with.
He held his breath waiting for the surprise. But as usual he was not surprised that for him there was no surprises and there were no doors for his category. What was surprising was all the other Observatrators were back and very busy counting various categories and so on – always losing count as they did

"Obviously failed in their task" he chuckled to himself.

You must be the most foolish of all fools – don't you think that was the first place they all looked? The little girl – Sorrele's daughter has been there for the last five years!
He suddenly realized that if the Observertrators were on the very edge of acceptance into heaven – he must be on the point of falling off altogether.
He looked down. Maybe this fact was the surprise and surprises were always nice – aren't they? Rejected by the rejected.
"May I ask two questions before I return to counting Cows in Animal heaven."
Hoping, off course, that that job was still available.
"Do you think anybody, Cape Town real estate would interest someone up here in heaven?"

"No"

"Why not?"

"Cape Town is part of heaven!"

The Chief Glerk then went on and on about his life in Cape Town, the surfing, mountain climbing, fishing, and finally the kick in the head during a rugby match that had brought him here.
The Observatrator reversed, bowing, leaving the Chief Glerk rattling way and thus never got to ask the second question.

I

Chapter eleven Part one

Twice a year Israel cries. Cars, busses, trains, stop in their tracks. We all stand to attention, still – dead still allowing the country let out her terrible cry. Shop-keepers, lawyers, petrol pump attendants, whores, old and young, fat thin, everyone, all at attention as the sirens blast out an agonizing wail, a wail that envelops the entire country. A wail, from a thousand sirens, big and small, blasts into the heavens above the Land of Israel.

Twice a year Israel cries. Once for us who were burnt to cinders then and there; and one for those of us, burnt to cinders now and here. For us, for us. The wail snakes down from the roofs, across the roads around the buildings and wraps each of us into its tentacles of identity and belonging.

Often choking us that we start counting the seconds to the end.

We shocked into the remembering of our Jewishness and then a week later, after have raised our hands in surrender to the Golden Ring, we are, reminded, lest we forget, God forbid, of our Israeliness and our children who have perished for that belonging.

Americans eat turkeys. English go swinging around a Maypole. The French get drunk and make love or dance around a prison, I would imagine.

We stand listening to the sobbing of the sirens for two minutes, listening to each siren around the city, finishing at slightly different times. I always imagined a giant uncle handing out sweets to each siren –stopping their crying, one after the other. We then generally grump around the streets and squares till the thoughts of another year of existence becomes to heavy to carry, so we go home.

We don't eat or swing or drink or make love. We shed a few have tears inside and out. I always consider the size of the country.

Nobody really lives in the West Bank and nobody really lives in the Negev. Removing these, the country is so tiny and so crowded it sometimes feels as we have returned to the ghetto. Of course we build the fences and we hold the guns. I often find myself giggling when hearing the attention paid to us on CNN or the UN.

Maybe the time has come where we start making love swinging around a pole – drunk and eat turkeys!

Chapter eleven Part two

All the assassinations it seems took place in such ceremonial locations. Opera houses, huge open cars, motorcades, temples, parliaments, and other such places of grandeur. Ghandi walked in subjective abject poverty on his way to prayer. The mob bosses, from what I understand, were well dressed, oiskaputsed, eating their favorite spaghetti, at the restaurants.

It is so appropriate, that our beloved Rabin was assassinated next to the Municipal building of Tel Aviv, next to the parking lot, in a passageway between two buildings, smelling of urine. Adjacent Tel Aviv's main Boulevard filled with busses, delivery mopeds, Japanese cars - their contents away sealed from the outside - motorbikes giving their riders some screaming pleasure. Police cars, ambulances, fire engines all rushing to someone else's story.

Life.

Life of his people.

The tough fearless Yid.

Whisking dead refugees from the hands of the British to the safety of a kibbutz – a peeing child on his shoulders. Leading sixteen year olds breaking through to Jerusalem. So shy, so unpretentious. How often I had demonstrated - holding signs for him to trust the enemy – and make peace now – immediately – it was time to drink beer under a palm tree and fornicate - I shouted while I was still young and innocent.

He trusted no one but his own – and by his own he died.

I belonged to a little group – the "Peace Guards". We met every week next to the exact spot where Rabin was assassinated.

Songs are sung from the hey day of Rabin's military career – the songs of the Palmach – the songs of forty-eight.

One of the interesting phenomena of Israel is the number of Peace Movements, in fact Movements of all kinds. All were run, of course, as the country itself with all the internal Byzantine bickering and politicking. Possibly for this reason "Public Folk Singing Groups" are so popular and everyone seems to be humming. Which other country would drown out Pavaroti in an outdoor concert! Leaving the maestro smiling from ear to ear.

As with most Israeli institutions, if not Israel itself, everyone is there for totally different reasons. As you have probably realized if you have read this far, I have a wont for the dramatic.

]These thoughts and the dismal end he endured, I guess, is the ultimate in drama. A drama which may still end with the curtains drawn tight.

We also meet on Days of Remembrance for the soldiers killed in battle. We allow the sirens' wail to wrap itself around us creating a warm sense of intense comradie.

It felt as if we were all his soldiers.

It felt as we were waiting for his orders.

Notwithstanding my problem with the glass-cage and all, I personally have made it a habit on these occasions while standing at strict attention, to sneak a slow, three hundred - degree peek - making sure everyone is standing to attention and quite still.

This time, to my horror, my eyes caught a slob leaning, hands above his head, on the wall. Dirty, unkempt hair, filthy clothes, nicotine stained fingers. When finally the very last siren stopped its wail, I maneuvered myself as fast as I could to him. I was about to beg him, implore him, to please, notwithstanding his obvious financial plight, to stand correctly at such times of national mourning.

I was on the point of giving him a lecture related to the need to "fit in" and not be a disgrace to humanity or us in particular. I was about to... when he raised his head and those familiar eyes, older now and duller- looked at me.

Gabi.

Chapter eleven Part 3

Since the Yom Kippur war of seventy three, I had been through a lot. I had suffered. I don't want to go through it - this is really not a story about me. It became quite apparent, as the years flew by, that the world was totally using a totally different list of rules to those I had learnt as a child from kindergarten onwards. The more I learned, the more I realized that I could make little sense of it all. I had long become convinced that order and punctuality and compliance with a norm were the best strategy to maintain a semblance of reason.

I found myself living in a three and a half room apartment in North Tel Aviv on the road to Haifa, married to a wonderfully ordered clerk from the Municipality where I had worked on sub-clause 74b of the building code for low rise housing, for twenty six and a half years now. Most of my free time I spend on the veranda waiting for a possible auto pile-up or counting ambulances – one for heart attack, two; motor accident, three and above; terrorist attack.

A CHAPTER WITHIN A CHAPTER (Chapter twelve)

During our long chats Gabi had often described his adventures in the African veldt. He told how zebras would spend ninety five percent of their waking time grazing.
Walking around in huge crowds – near some water and graze.
Laboring consistently - converting tons of grass into compressed protein.
On the other hand the lions seemed the laziest Animals on earth spending most of their time just sleeping a dreamless sleep. Every now and again the male lion either by being nagged by his rumbling stomach or by his lioness's incessant nagging, would go off to get a Zebra or something to eat.
The hunting and the killing here is part of the food chain and of course naturally acceptable. Be that it as it may - how unfair the victim zebra had been working on the "conversion process" all his life while the lion just lay around.
Within a short period of time all that good protein transferred from one to the other!
The final killing ritual had been performed for hundreds of generations – the zebra specie protected by their vast numbers.
Their running speed no match for the lion. Often have I wondered why they ran at all – the lion wouldn't be eating more than one or two anyway.
The fact is, the whole running action wasn't against the zebra enemy but against themselves.
Each individual zebra wished to live another day. The maneuvers they performed, sudden turns to the left or right was not an attempt to deceive the lion but some other zebra into a perilous position – which always happened. No sooner had the lion clamped his teeth into the under-throat of a zebra that had mistakenly strayed left instead of right, did the rest of the zebras resume their work of grazing.
No zebra felt either mourning or sadness but simply relief.
Within those big, disproportioned heads they knew it was their fortune to be zebras and what had happened, would soon or later, be happening again.

My parents had very similar characteristics to those of zebras.
They were Jews.
They never questioned why, accepting the advantages and disadvantages of being such much as a zebra accepted his stripes.

They were not particularly religious Jews or Secular Jews. They were not Socialist Jews, Revisionist Jews, Communist Jews, Liberal Jews, Bundist Jews, Haredi Jews, Mitnagdim Jews, Zionist Jews.
They were just Jews.
Not even good Jews nor bad Jews – just Jews, as most Jews were.
When the scent of evil began approaching from the west, they eyed the flock carefully and vigilantly followed its movements, never to be the one that strayed.
Never to be the one to turn left when the flock was turning right
The possibility of their species being annihilated was not considered and if it was, it certainly had little to do with them individually.

Each one wished simply to live another day. And when another Jew was shot arbitrarily in the street, it was relief that they would live another day that encompassed their souls.
My Mother was from Gdansk.
Her Father noticed that most in his street were heading east. He managed to purchase black-market train tickets for his two girls. They said their "good byes" at the over crowded station, not realizing how far east they were to travel, not realizing how absolutely final their good byes were to be.

If ever someone ask her the secret of her survival she just say she was taught to be a seamstress as a child and worked hard sewing uniforms for the Soviet army.
Not so long ago I discovered that a distant uncle of mine was the camp baker and had been able to slip her an extra slice of this or that.
Her sister, unfortunately, came down with typhus and did not survive.
It was only much, much later that she realized that the Labor camp in deep Siberia was in fact a fort for her protection, the cruel task masters – angels. The scent of evil from the west – a sickening stench – a stench that covered the whole of Poland and more – a stench that had also totally covered the family of my Father.
My Father had remained in Warsaw with his family.
Their their road not only seemed to stay put but many more families were pouring from in outlying villages to the safety of numbers.
My Father too, was soon on a train.
His survival was a result pure luck. Not even the luck of poker but more the luck of a 'one armed bandit'.
He was sent on a "transport" – his face near an air vent.
He was selected to work - he was not too young and not too old.
He knew how to cut hair - cut the hair off the victims. Family and friends included, burning out half his brain.
The plan of nature had gone awry.
It wasn't the case of one zebra but all.
Their bared throats had been readied and stretched for the bite - but for the very, very few that had turned left instead of right.
Those he recognized he cut a second or two longer than allotted - Never hinting that their lives were to be only a few seconds longer, There was no point.
He was shorter when the taller ones were destroyed.
He was taller when the shorter ones were destroyed.
And always found him adjacent to the every third one or every second one.

When every thing was over and all was lost they found each other in Germany in a camp for Displaced People.
They were about to move to the America but young tanned Jewish emissaries arrived from Palestine and they decided that's where they wished to be.
Where else?
Where was the alternative?
This was now their family.
It was clear that only within the family one could possible find trust, caring, empathy.
It was a country that wore the same Star of David on its flag, on the sewerage drains, that they had had on their stripes.
It feels almost galling telling these two horrific stories in so few words. These are about all the words they spoke of it throughout their lives.
At the beginning they would not speak and anyway I would not hear and when I wished to hear they could not speak.
They lived as if they had had a computer program installed at liberation – "Compulsive Need to *Lehistader*".
For them this had the most minimal description. A little apartment with doors only they were in charge of, a steady income, three meals a day – halla on Friday night in front of the Shabbat candles.
For most this would be called frugal but for them it was a miracle they didn't dream of just a short few years back.
They played cards on a warm summer's night with co-travelers from the past. The men in undershirts, tattoo numbers flashing to-and-fro, sat on the balcony, in close proximity to balconies of other 'co-travelers'. Close enough so that vociferous conversations could take place and even participated in, even from over the road.
An outsider could never understand that all this noise was, for them, quiet.

They had no idea of how to pilot me through youth. They never had "youth". They never understood why I shouldn't use patched clothes for school, why I shouldn't be allowed to buy falafel on the street with my friends or why I wished to go camping.

His tattoo pointed accusingly at me – silencing any possible question I may have had about my own meager misery.

Could any situation I find myself in be worse than what they had been through? He would bellow. He would holler.

Didn't they deserve the quiet and peace, for a while? My task was to fulfill my duty. To marry, multiply and lehistader. There was nothing else they demanded.

'Multiply' – the word echoed over and over.

"Look at your Uncle Maishe – the doorman at the Hilton – had his balls cut off – without anaesthetic "
"Multiply!"

None of us, unfortunately, had any idea what lehistader was or what kind of path led to it – all paths having been destroyed and burnt back there.

Wild arguments always ending with stinging smacks though my face with his Yiddish newspaper

I remember how proud they were seeing me my army uniform, my Jewish army uniform, and how relieved they had been, when, during the Six Day War, I accidentally shot myself in my foot, while cleaning my rifle, prior to the storming the Golan Heights by my brave unit.
My Father never even understood why I should wish to be more than a clerk in the Jewish Agency stamping the right form with the right rubber stamp. Drinking long glasses of hot Russian tea reminding him of *his* Father with each slurp.
All they wished for me was to *lehistader*[1].
All the money they received as the reparations from Germany, he had been kept for that end as they did with the money my mother made from working on sewing till late at night on that old hand-operated Singer sewing machine.
When the time came, and having married, it required an enormous effort explaining to them that buying a three and a half room apartment in North Tel Aviv, was an integral part of *lehistader*.

Eventually I did manage to free them of their savings.

Surely it should be their greatest pleasure seeing their son and eventually grandsons happily established in a three and a half roomed flat in the best part of town.

Nothing here is actually relevant to my story except I that realize now that they had installed the same computer program into me as that they had in themselves...

The program of lehistader had come to its end. Had run its course.

Back to chapter eleven
I loved the way she cut our salad. I felt secure making love every Tuesday – when my penis complied fully to a Pavlovian reaction to the TV weather forecast after the news – a predictability that was so comforting. The lovemaking always took place while listening to the BBC World Radio talk show on gardening – which we both enjoyed immensely. The resulting children all seemed to have read Dr Spock following all the instructions,to the last letter.

Knowing my wife and seeing my amazing children I am absolutely convinced that she had actually somehow selected the sperm she wished to implant after I had ejaculated and fallen asleep. (Probably using some tip gleaned from the BBC World Radio on gardening.)

How I was startled when she took control, as the Iraqi missiles began falling on us. She ignored the fact that that I was already a vetaren of a number of wars. (That I wasn't a very good soldier she had no way of her knowing), I certainly had, as in the "primitive societies", proved my manhood. Igoring this she superbly organized our little "Anna Frank" cupboard- our little bomb shelter - doubling the required amounts of plastic sheeting, caustic soda cloths and so on. I will never forget her forcing me to give my gas mask to my little son – who had left his outside after air raid siren had already sounded. I looked down to see those eyes looking at me, through the glass, wondering if he had killed his father. I filled with horror at the thought that, not withstanding all of my own scientific

predictions, I was about to perish in a cloud of gas, together with my little boy. I didn't have the nerve to explain that my gasmask didn't fit him.

The wars, intafada, Iraqi missiles and Israeli politicians all falling on our heads, only accentuated my love and obsessive need of ironed starched shirts, spotless white vests, salads chopped "as I like it" as much my love of our second hand Subaru 1400 car.

I also loved eating humus and shishlik when going on a splurge every second Sunday of the month. The feeling of well being was so overwhelming that often I considered begging my family to stand to attention and sing "Hatikva" after the last course of baklava and those ridiculously little cups of Turkish. Unfortunately I knew they wouldn't agree and anyway I had this constant problem with my digestive tract.

Continuation of chapter ten

I mention all this as I should have fallen on him shouting, "Gabi Gabi", and have tears pour over my starch-ironed blue shirt. There was no way I would or could touch even his dirty sleeve! Intense panic rushed itself through my entire body.

The cage I had built around myself, made out of thin crystal glass, was now in jeopardy of cracking and splintering. Within this shield I was just able to exist, the past – present, and unpredictable future was on the outside. Over there - over there. Not here- not in here.

But I knew now that the die had been cast

I could have at least tried to bend down and help him into the perpendicular. Having no other alternative however, I was forced to use bait instead of the now impossible physical contact.

"Gabi, it's me – your old friend.

Hands still on the wall.

"Where have you been – so much has happened – where have you been? Come on, old friend; let me invite you to some coffee". I found myself rattling as was my wont.

I secretly hoped, feeling my money pocket, he wouldn't expect much more than a cup of coffee- in Israel 'having a cup of coffee' usually entails eating a meal with courses and sub-courses - sufficient to supply all the various Yugoslavian armies together.

We walked out from under the municipality, across the Rabin Square. In Israel, as if indecisiveness unacceptable, the weather changes suddenly – autumn switches the skies from rain to sun then back to rain - from the unbearable heat to cold back and forth. It has been said that part of the Jewish character had been created by this insane, unstable pendulum of change and uncertainty.

Usually the almost treeless square is usually unbearable during the day – but now the clouds formed a dramatic cover. Looking at my friend and being what I am, I imagined a hupa used in the joining the souls of two old warriors.

Absolute rubbish but a nice thought.

We walked through the fading shadow of the huge Shoah memorial finally arriving at my favorite coffee shop just off the square, up _____ street on the corner of Maseryk Square.

Chapter eleven part one

Gabi walked that typical depressed walk I knew so well – slightly bent over, staring at the ground, hands limply at his side, feet scraping every now and again.

Finally we arrived at _____ coffee shop. One that had been my favorite

He sat not caring which way he faced. I, of course, with the glass cage beginning to gently pull itself tighter around me, had no choice but to stand on the opposite side.

"Where have you been – so much has happened – where have you been?"

Then without warning he switched from silent depression to an almost manic outflow expressing his years of pain. Imagine a fire hose lying limply – then suddenly filling then spurting hundreds of gallons of water in an instant.

The amount said, was enormous. I felt as if I was a judge listening to a final summation, knowing that judging to be the last possible function I could allow myself to possibly fulfill.

People turned, listened and gaped – unabashedly, as is the case in Israel. Soon, various divisions and sub- sections of the society surrounded us, leaning on tables or backing onto the wall. They were not only listening with intensity but also gauging the story being told, with their own.

As the years pass I am more convinced that Tel Avivians identify more satisfyingly with hyper - manic outbursts than quiet tidy and orderly men; such as me.

You probably doubt the truth of my tale. Kafkaesque you say. In Tel Aviv we don't search for his "meanings". We see his writings as simple, common stories we all live through.

Most of what Gabi said has already been related in previous paragraphs. He then started filling things that gave reason to a lot I knew and a lot of new events that had little reason in the telling.

Chapter eleven part two

As you have may have already guessed the little kid, found by that Observatrator, previously described, was indeed Gabi.

]Just as a tribesman in darkest Africa, Gabi did not realize there was any other form of life. Gabi never realized that life could be lived without the continual scream in his brain or the apparition of a spinning girl. Never stopping, never, even for a micro - second.

He discovered certain relief when as a child jumped from roofs using a self-made non-opening parachute, cycling over narrow bridges crashing more often than succeeding. Sprinting across busy high ways – hearing, and getting pleasure from the screech of tires. The screech blocking out the cries of the girl.

He undertook action that had his left his own scream blanking that high-pitched cry let out by Sorrele's daughter.

As he got older the need for an even louder scream and the ability to almost always achieve it became slowly more obvious to him. It wasn't the danger itself that appealed to him but the result of the danger – the buzz – the "scream". Anything to cut the incessant cry of that little girl, spinning continuously his head.

Slowly the bicycle became a near-brakeless motorcycle driven at 180KPH. Challenging a bunch of huge, wild, anti-Semitic hoodlums to a fight. Smoking marijuana by the kilo. Drinking cheap wine by the gallon then wading through a turbulent anti-apartheid demonstration to pee on the wheels of a police van.

This was told with gasps that in our previous relationship had not been apparent. But with haste. The point he wished to get to wasn't too far behind all this trivia and he wished to smash through it as quickly as possible. The impatience reminded me of the way I read books- straight to the back, to the final outcome – the meaningless jargon in the middle - of little interest.

His smoking became more and more incessant as his monologue continued. His fingers were nicotine yellow going onto brown.

Although wrapped in a glass cage, the smell penetrated and was overbearing.

The cry of the little girl had become more deafening. The more frantic the attempts to pacify her became, the more she grappled with his every move, his every thought.

I tried hard to imagine his life in South Africa as compared it to mine.

In school for him, learning, had become impossible. Sport, however was amazing. He would hold the rugby ball tight to his chest, aim for a spot on the try line and charge, smashing through the entire opposing team, all resistance. The girls yearning, wild cheering, the scoreboard like spinning and the fresh fragrance of moist turf – all totally ignored. His movements - animal. His mind blocked off from all. The spinning girl's cries stifled briefly – until the next charge.

I tried hard to conceive of myself charging through a bunch of young muscled men. I couldn't stand and still can't tolerate, anything even touching me. I have been known to get off busses, stop elevators even hide in airplane toilets after being forced into touching others. I recall that at this stage of life being described, even clothes hurt me, scratched me and were ripped off at the first opportunity.

I had held cupped hands in a circle of my Socialist Zionist youth movement members singing and dancing to the words of solidarity- looking deeply at each ones most inner feelings and feeling that great force of supercilious righteousness in our path to a fresh new world. Rather they did – for some reason they never seemed to look into my eyes!

I would take in the dry beach sand and hear the sound of the small waves breaking on the Mediterranean coast. I developed this theory of oneness with nature and truth.

The Movement would surely approve of lovemaking in these sands related to these theories. I remember clearly my near overwhelming need to sing the International as I lying exhausted next to my lover.

To this day I still recall my fantasy of a smooth, sun tanned skinned, young girl wearing short khaki pants and carrying an appropriately outsized machine gun. After wiping out all these "have" classes I was sure we would finally find world peace and the end to anti-Semitism. I found it simpler at the time, to have a world class war for the things I didn't have yet deserved and couldn't mention.

Maybe after the revolution when the smoke had settled, maybe I could chat with my Mom and Dad about this and that.

Yes, and sex. He loved sex. He loved the hunt. The hunt was exhilarating. Find the most beautiful womanly woman and after all the accepted and expected foreplay and foreplay was always kneeling before him. He loved looking at whole capture and act. He watched his penis enter her, filling her. He watched the body below him. Surrendering to him. A deer surrendering to a lion. The chase over. The curves, the warmth, the size. Captured. No oneness with nature here. All controlled. It was all his control, his doing. He could see her writhe as he controlled her with powerful thrusts. Her pleasure was of no interest to him. Yes – it was all his doing. Each time he captured and entered – deep – as deep as he could go he achieved a peace of sorts- a quiet of sorts. Until the next hunt and capture and explosive orgasm- filling the life he had and grabbing another inch of life for himself.

He had been very graphic, as soldiers tend to be when relating such matters.

I admit that I was a little affected. I think, although none of us admitted it when

Had I missed something while growing? Was there something missing in the total union I had had with my Socialist sex - partners? The giving and the taking we had found in each other? This was the only natural way? Wasn't it? The proletariat always demanded mutual respect? Wasn't our way the way of the wild? Of nature? The love of all creatures? Creatures of love and caring.

I remember vividly laying after a perfect union, next to my sex partner on the Tel Aviv beach, the sound of the small Mediterranean waves, the warm night breeze over our naked bodies. I remember vividly wishing to stand to attention with her, as naked as we were, and sing the International.

He had long forgotten love – he remembered only the love his Mother had had for him – the concern of his Mother. The total acceptance his mother had for him, never understanding his disturbed soul. The love of another was of no relevance. How was it possible to give or receive love with a screaming spinning little girl implanted deep in his gut? His whole existence was an obsession with quieting that scream. If not for a few days then maybe for a few minutes! For a micro – second if that was all that was possible.

He mentioned he had had a son who was killed on his way to Lebanon when the two helicopters crashed.

I always find myself making totally inappropriate comments at people's funerals; I thus have a fast rule never to say a word at the funerals of children.

I wanted to remind him.

But I didn't.

The purple haze.

But I didn't.

The laughter.

But I didn't.

I was about to tell him the story of how my wife must have hand picked the semen on after the Pavlovian event that occurred on Tuesday evening after the weather forecast.

I just said instead something to the effect that it was a terrible incident,

And that I too have two sons,

But unlike his they were both normal.

They were amazing this new generation, aren't they?

He mentioned how the little girl had got him to volunteer for the army in nineteen sixty seven – before the six- day war

He mentioned serving in Lebanon during the battle and in the years that followed

Yes, I said, yes so had I.

The conversation then melted into and 'I been there or here', to which I would reply, 'Yes, yes there but no not here.'

Beautiful country- such a pity.

Yes. Pity.

He mentioned names of our seventy three unit. I remembered none yet nodded my head. It was so far away now.

And the glass cage, fortunately, kept all that away from disturbing my ordered and simple life. Turning now to the subject of army my cage inexplicably became narrower, began squeezing my body.

And the glass thicker.

Not at all what I initially had planned.

"The most unusual part of hearing this incessant screaming and seeing this spinning body was the inability sharing my despair. Often I recall the story of the survivor of the first German Aktion, naked and bloodied reporting to the Judenratt, immediately put into the clinic as insane. How was I ever going to express the pain I was feeling as year after year passed? Who would believe me and surely any hint of my condition that would create an instant delegitimization of my very existence. I would appear not AS other but another.

"Once as a child, at school, some friends of mine smashed my finger, slamming a door on it. I remember how strange it seemed that only I really could understand the meaning and intensity of my own pain. I noticed with a certain type of surprise that all six hundred other students at school just went on with their day as usual."

"But my friend," I nearly touched his hands in sympathy, "why did you not try to search for me? We have been through much –would I not have listened? Would I not have found some path to help you, maybe some expert to whom you could be referred. We surely could have done something about her- the constant screaming. I, for instance, suffer from ear-drums when I was a 4 inch mortar man during the war of attrition. Since then I have this constant whistling in both my ears. I bought an apartment on the Main Haifa road and with all the heavy traffic, trucks, busses the noise is countered with the outside. To tell you the truth, the whistling still continues however I now curse the disturbances experienced by all and not just a noise emanating from my inner ear. I am convinced that if a survey was done it would be found that all the owners of property on the main roads were either in mortars or artillery!"

He heard not one word and to tell the truth I had no way of translating the cure of my constant disturbance to his, without understanding the picture in full. I thought to myself that I was a bit overwhelmed with my own observations on private pain yet it seemed so insignificant related to his!

He suddenly looked up at me – did your unit do tavasim? ("Peacocks" - code word for patrolling through the orchards of Lebanon – Vietnam - style searching for guerillas – in order to get them before they got our convoys on the coastal road and allowing them to blow us up before they got to them. Which to my untrained mind seemed a bit strange seeing both us and those in the convoys on the coastal road were both soldiers in the same army. Why was there a need to involve "middle men" in the first place?

"Yes."

As we seem to be heading towards my own army career I would like at this stage in the story like to explain to the reader that I have the world record for being a "lost soldier". I have a tendency to get lost. I have probably had more search parties, helicopters and frigates looking for me than any soldier before or after forty eight.

I remember well that night, training with thirty rubber Zodiac dinghies off Ashkelon, deep in the Mediterranean. Hanging on for sweet mercy as number two, I had to bend over into a crumpled position, spectacles splashed with salt wate, to the extent that it hardly fulfilled its designed function, teeth grinding, wind ramming the upper and lower race-horse lips apart—grabbing the petrol tank- as the boat was hit by waves coming this way then that, creating more than a slight wobbly situation .

I found myself flying over the forty horsepower Evinrude engine and deep into the silence of the night black Mediterranean sea. The lights of Ashkelon on the one side of me, the disappearing little red lights of our boats heading for the horizon, on the other. I knew it would not be long before the radios on all our boats would be buzzing with the news of me of my pre-destined situation – lost! And then that horrible wait for the little lights to return to the area I was, lying quietly translating my new situation into some parable to be quoted one day or written about.

The degradation of having thirty rubber dinghies circle me. I must be one of the first people on earth who have seen his life rush before his eyes being saved as I was pulled through, under and out the water and into the snarling face of the commanding officer.

Mainly, of course, I never regarded myself as lost at all. I had just stopped for some of the reddest cherries or the sweetest oranges on this earth when, after a certain while found myself surrounded by a search team.

Once, while on one of that tavasim, just mentioned by Gabi, I honestly didn't hear the whispers of the sergeant ordering us to return. I think they found me, still crouching over, camouflage leaves going brown and getting in my eyes, nose, mouth, rifle loaded and cocked, slowly approaching Sweden.

Once, I recollect, I found the whole exercise so ridiculous, taking into consideration my age the number of wars I had attended - I simply stood up in the middle of an orange grove and returned have a snooze in our tent.

The tents were at the far end of the compound attached to the once wealthy farmer's, coastal-road house. I, of course, continue 'sleeping' through the noises of our half-tracks starting up, preparing for the "Great Search" of me!

I indeed knew tavasim well – the same tavasim that Gabi knew. Well the same, just another zoo.

"As you well know I've always been known to jump into the front line. Even in Lebanon, notwithstanding my serious doubts about being there – I found myself flying over others to get into action. Action. Action. Action.

"Of course armies always appraise soldiers by their actions I thus soon became a commander leading tavasim. I admit I loved every second. I admit I enjoyed being a hunter and being a hunted hunter. All focus directed at keeping my men and myself alive. It was one of the few times that she was not heard. She was there but not heard".

"I certainly appreciate what you are saying, Gabi, notwithstanding that all this effort in remaining alive began to bore me. The fear over there, however, was so great that I once mentioned that the crossing of the border could easily be equated with plunging into a freezing swimming pool after sipping Vodka and lemonade on the sun deck of a pleasure cruiser.

He did not hear me.

"Have you never seen her face to face – or does she only spin. "

He heard me.

"She has never left me. When I'm awake she commands me mercilessly. Shouting orders, begging, crying. When I'm asleep she plays and laughs with me as if I was a child. She never attempted to explain why she wanted me to do this or that. Nothing was too important that could excuse me from fulfilling her every wish, however frivolous.

"And you never saw her?"

"I saw her twice. I saw her twice since meeting her as a child. Often have I thought I recognized her.

"Sometimes I'd find myself passing some school or other, checking either some kid doing a hopscotch jump, as I had seen her once do, jumping from the hay-stack. Occasionally I do some arithmetic and search for a woman maybe a little older than I, with the same olive skin, considering the vague possibility of her growing older. Where else should she be, I always rationalized, but here? Notwithstanding the screaming spinning apparition in my brain I searched for her outside. I would even cross roads if a little girl there had some similarities to her.

"I was fortunate, however, to see her twice although the circumstances were far from happy."

There was a long break. I felt the story too delicate at this stage for me to interrupt – even if I had been inclined to do so.

"Did you attend that huge demonstration for Rabin and peace and against violence? I am sure; knowing you and your left-wing origins I am sure you did".

"Yes".

"I was there with my best friend. She had lost her brother in the same storm of seventy-three, we found ourselves in.

"She had become my co-demonstrator. I pushed myself almost to the front of the masses. There were thousands upon thousands of co-believers there and then.

"I heard our leaders mumble loudly about this and that. I heard cheers going up about then and now. I heard the songs of peace being sung by her and him. It was as if the world again had finally, finally stopped it's trembling.

As difficult as it was to conceive, it really seemed peace for us had really arrived. Hundreds and hundreds of years and it really seemed that we were finally accepted by all. Smilingly. Smartingly smiling.

Greek conquest, Roman conquest, slavery in Babylon, English expulsion, Inquisition, sweeping through Crusaders, Cossacks, Ukraine Holocaust, European Shoah, 48, 56, 67, 69, 73, 91…– all flashed above the stage in the dramatic end-of-autumn lightening, lighting the dead faces of so many ghosts.

"Weren't we, my little couzina and I, part of that miracle? I closed my eyes and there she was, resting her head on my sweaty bloodied battle dress, There she was black with the dust of forty years. Hair long and knotted, thumb in mouth, side of nose pushing into my chest – taking in deep gasps of breathe as children do at the end of a crying spell, the shivering, tears, snot and the absolute, absolute need for love and warmth and caring.
This is the end of our torment, my sweet little girl. You can rest now, my baby.
I'll love you forever.
I'll love you for ever and ever.
We will allow the Peace to envelop us, warm us. Our category has been accepted.
Our category has been finally accepted.

"Then three shots. In the autumn.

"Just three.

"In those horrible minutes I found eyes oscillating from my girl to the events around me.

"I was desperately trying to believe the shots were a dream.

"I was desperately trying to continue, trying to start a conversation with the little girl.
"I'll take you to the elephants mina couzina, I will you show the Giraffes and the Lions. Don't go! Come with me - there is much to see and do!"
I searched for words to throw at her –to lasso and pull her towards me! I knew what was to follow. I knew there was no way of stopping the inevitable.

She started spinning. Her hands flung out. The last sight was of a little girl disappearing into the pain of spin and the spin of pain.

With all my strength, I could stop neither the outside events nor the pained spin of Sorrele's daughter.

What will become of you my little couzina?

What will become of us, the remnants of the Greuse Aktion?"

There was a absolute silence between us.

I slid furtively from his train of thought onto mine.

Yes, yes - I loved that man Rabin. Not like a Stalin or a Lenin as we did on the kibbutzim, but as a believer in humanism to the ultimate end. To be extreme leftist or rightist is easy but how difficult it is to be an extreme humanist. How he took the wretched from the holocaust and turned them into beloved soldiers- literally scratching out a tiny sanctuary on Earth. The stories flowed one after another. How he scratched out a little peace of earth where we could be shielded by strength alone, our strength physical, emotional – the ability to give of oneself totally to a dream. Where our self esteem mangled since Babylon could be slowly restored.

I had been surprised that the loud music, to which we had been dancing, suddenly stopped.

Out of context but so taken by the spinning girl, I asked.

" And that's the only time you've seen her?"

"There was one other time, just a second, maybe even less."

His seemingly manic attack over, he continue in a calm voice.

"I was commanding a section of guys searching for guerillas in the cherry orchids of Lebanon. I'm sure you know that hyper-fear in your gut and throat. We came around a bend and saw a bullet sprayed white house built on stilts. Under the house - a donkey eating oats or something – evidence that the house was occupied. I heard from within a definite scraping. I pulled out a grenade and primed it.

"Get permission to throw grenade." I said to a sergeant carrying the radio.

"No! No I won't! Let's move on – ignore it! How do you know its not the Mossad in there- the intelligence guys wonder around here as if it was the center of Tel-Aviv"

"Very soon there was an argument, all in whispers, all lying on our stomachs, maybe 20 meters from the house. The various political parties represented in my unit all presented their cases and then very, very quietly swore at each other.

"You right wing bastard fascist – typical myopic, self-centered, moronic shit"

" Your mother is a whore and you a soft hearted left -wing Gola - Jew, you peace of soap," came the reply shot back

"The right-wing had far better curses.

"The neutral sides desperately lay quietly - eyeing the Lebanese cherry trees.

"Truth be told, it is this little democratic bickering that I absolutely love about us.

"I read somewhere that when the last Jews – the very last Jews - still surviving the Warsaw massacre, lying in the sewers at the end of the uprising, there was a majestic debate was held as to which political affiliation had the right to commit suicide and throw the last grenade. (Which naturally was given to your bloody Socialist Hashomer Hatsair – for having started and run the whole uprising.)

"I have never heard of another people in this world so concerned with their countries future way of life, while purely objectively, the chances of any future, whatsoever, seemed so minimal.

"I am willing to die for it, I thought, but certainly not because of it. We reached a compromise where I would sneak up to the door and clean the room with my rifle keeping my eye just ahead of the bullets.

"I smashed the door open as my finger closed on the trigger.

"My girl lunged out my gut, just below my rib cage and still spinning, she made a grab for my rifle as I tried to pull it away her. My mind lurched into wild action imagining that my darling spinning girl was killing me.

"I looked up and there stood a little snotty nosed, Arab girl, holding her filthy teddy bear – observing the struggle with the roundest eyes known to man.

"I did another spin – she had vanished. Sorrele's daughter's soul had re-enmeshed itself with mine, vanishing back – deep into the canyons of my mind – into the depths of my guts.

"Another spin and the Arab girl broke into tears and tightly held her bear. We moved on, each of wondering, as we tend to do in the Israeli Army."

I always admired my friend. I don't really believe he would have opened fire anyway. We had heard of the RPG kids. Twelve and thirteen year old kids, walking up to tanks and knowing the softness of our troopers, blowing the tank and tankists away.

Gabi would always find solutions to such problems – morally or militarily or morally military.

I knew it was going to happen and it did. I knew it from the moment I recognized him at Rabin's assassination memorial. I wished he would continue speaking but he didn't. He was now waiting for me.

We walked together silently. In my mind I was pleading with him to continue his story but there again there was absolute silence – he was now waiting for me – the ball was in my court – I was in the air - and it was heading towards my racket. Nothing could be done give a return shot the best I could.

chapter eleven part three

"As you well know I am not a very good soldier – you should know more than anyone – I was like a little child throughout our war. Do you remember? Without you I doubt I would have got through

"After the war, there being no Suez Canal, the number of Zodiac platoons were halved. Obviously I was the first to be thrown out. Funnily I was transferred to an even more highly combatant, anti – tank missile, platoon. I became convinced then that if I was thrown out of enough units, I would eventually land up being a fighter pilot or commando."

He either wasn't amused or possibly he knew the bombshell was still on its way. Either way he just looked down and said not a word.

"Sounds very sophisticated but in fact my job was to pass the missiles lying at the bottom of the APC to the guys at the top. Ha – in training – I either sat on the floor or got thrown from one steel side to the other as they zoomed me all over the place. They jugger-jugger-juggered me all over the place in a little helicopter – a ton weight tripod strapped to my back. Gabi I often thought of you as these fine young fighters pushed and pulled me to the top of a hill, being used for training –preventing me from rolling head over heels backwards.

Very soon, as was in my previous units they discovered my lack of attributes.

As in our old platoon and through my life – from kindergarten onwards, I found the group was soon divided 'for' and 'against' me! I wasn't a politician. I never had any platform as such. Ha. Except maybe my existence, of course (

confusing me).

"It was my apparent insanity that upset most. My words escaped – flying helter-skelter - uncontrollably pushing the mercury level through the top of their thermometers. I was regarded as lazy – but this wasn't true – you know that – I just never heard commands – and when I did, I always seemed to see through them and the stupidity of them – unlike the others.

"Remember how I always somehow kept losing myself. Throwing grenades into the Suez Canal, picking up the fish, or chasing doves over a mine field in Egypt which I saw more as a scientific experiment than accruing the elements for the lunch was preparing.

"It was not exactly my fault that I found eating fresh red cherries in Lebanon far more interesting than chasing guerillas or terrorists. Ha. How often did I find myself surrounded by our own angry troops – my embarrassed smile shining through a red stained face?

"Ha – I think I hold the Guinness Record for getting lost.

"Once, in second grade, doing paper-cuttings I looked up to find the class of kids I was with gone, I simply was trying to glue and re-glue the..."

Gabi was getting a bit upset being presented with all this smog. I was desperately hoping he would break in and tell me more of his life, his wife, his children, his lovers.

It was as if he knew the important parts were waiting – hiding as if it were behind a wall – waiting for the charge. He wouldn't let me off. He simply wouldn't let me off.

"Ha – I remember how I angered all when – while ambushing in the Jordan valley – bored and hungry, I opened a packet of halvah – each crack of each fold of aluminum foil in the dead silence of the night - the shot of a rifle. Each crack pushing the blood pressure of my fellow ambushes to new heights. Each crack letting out our position to every terrorist from Saudi Arabia to Northern Iraq.

"Truth be told – more often than not I felt myself going across to the "*anti – me*" part of the group!"

Still no response. No words. He seemed to know more than he was letting on. He was waiting. Why did I have to continue? I could give him a lecture on the architecture and history of Tel Aviv instead. What right did he have waiting for my words?

"I don't believe we should be there. Being knocked off by an Arab, even justifiably – well, was not on the cards. I was married – I had children – I was replenishing the losses that had happened there, over there – at all cost this was the most vital task of my existence. We had to be replenished. Every child born is another bullet into the dastardly memory of Hitler – the asshole.

" 'Multiply'. It was even a command in our religon"

A short story plonk in the middle of chapter eleven.

Nineteen ninety-one found me soldiering on the West Bank.
Every man in Israel, in those days, served theoretically a minimum of one month a year in the army. Thirty days, minus the day of induction, three days of battle revision (one of which spent in the sick bay after collapsing during lessons in first aid or chemical warfare), four days of mandatory leave and that never-ending day of release. This left a twenty-one days of real army, and these I ticked these off much as a jailbird would his days of incarceration.
I hated the army. I hated reserves. I hated the olive green-uniforms, into which I literally threw myself into, as if into a cold shower. They made all the "inmates" look so much alike - and making me, the eternal shlump, stand out like a sore thumb.

Naturally all the negative aspects of my troubled life, reached their peak as I drove away from home - a raving wife in the car mirror, frantically waving some freshly arrived pink official letters.

For those readers who have not attended armies – it's not all those horrible things we see on CNN that are disturbing. Not the dropping bombs, the bayonet charge, blowing up houses.
Its finding oneself year after year, being inducted just as the calamities of life begin to evolve. It's when the guy who sold you the TV has arrived at the front door demanding immediate payment before measures are taken. Reserve duty, he says is an old (looking at me) overused excuse - the wife, naturally not having known anything of the transaction, is smashing her head on the floor

Whenever I happen to see a movie of the Roman wars, Hannibal, Crusaders or whatever, my heart always goes out to the poor soldiers thinking of what mess they had left behind at home.
Every state revenue department inevitably opens fire with heavy artillery, exactly a week before every induction. Life is truer than a stand up comedy. Income tax, vat, national-insurance, traffic department, a few banks all seem to have passed the vital intelligence of my pending induction among themselves. Some already sending letters from various courts charging,
"The State of Israel against *Me*"
Me.
Me that had attended all the wars, that had suffered so much as an Israeli in the middle of its latest saga.
Me that had given so much to that very State – now turns against *Me*?
On such a petty matter as debt.
I always had thought we were battle buddies – the state and I - now it take up arms with my opponents!
And of course always, as I'm searching, high and low in the flat for my army boots and stuff, that desperate phone my current lover, telling of her latest pregnancy.

But as the days past and after a few sleepless nights all that is left far behind slowly begins the fading process.

How I pity the reservist today wired to hell by his cellular telephone.

Nineteen ninety one found me soldiering on the West Bank . It was Intafada One time. My unit was sent to Ramallah, just North of Jerusalem – and Jalazune – a refugee camp just north of Ramallah.
Ramallah, being middle class in a feudalist society, wasn't very big. It bore some vague semblance to our little towns. Jalazune wasn't very big either but well populated.
Extremely well populated.
Jalazune bore resemblance to nothing on earth. Well, nothing I was familiar with except other refugee camps I visited on my various other spells of army duty.

I never bothered asking where our patrols going or even looked at a map. I preferred just marching around, at the end of the squad, feeling as if I was on a tourist bus in a foreign country. I always peeked through doors and up alleys trying to figure their life style and comparing it to ours – finding almost no similarity whatsoever. Even their chickens seemed skinnier.
We usually patrolled Ramallah in squads of four giving me that old 6 day war feeling of omnipotence. Four soldiers occupying a whole town. Of the four only one had real bullets in case of real problems. The others rifles were adjusted for shooting rubber bouncing bullets against bouncing children throwing bouncing stones.
On the other hand, rifle at the ready, (pouches theoretically filled with magazines and grenades) I felt for the first time in my life, some kind of bully.
Me a bully! Good God. I have always been on the bullied side of things. This felt most uncomfortable.
The best part was taking over the roof of some building in the middle of the town,

their chickens were skinnier than ours – but that may just have been my left wing pinko heart.
"Left wing" was treated as some kind of a religion in our Company.
"You are religious and can't guard tonight because it's Friday, the Sabbath? – that's ok – you can home till Sunday."
"You are left wing and can't use batons against a rioting mob? – that's ok go read a newspaper in the dining hall, I think there is some coffee left"
And I had some little idiosyncrasies of my own.
At our roadblock for instance, I spoke Yiddish to the drivers who knowing the procedure only too well, obeyed – following years of the same ritual.
I was so pleased probably spinning the European intellectual world upside down.
About ten TV stations filmed me. I think they were waiting, hopefully, for me to be blown to smithereens. So was I. Waiting – not hopefully.

Nineteen ninety-one found me soldiering on the West Bank. Jalazune lay at the bottom of a hill while above it the road ran the road from Jerusalem to Nablus and a number of the brand new, spick and span, Israel settlements. At night we lay in ambush trying as best we could to prevent stones, Molotov cocktails and grenades being thrown at our brave settlers' cars and busses. Apart from a chance to lay quietly looking at the moon, and eating halva by the kilo, nothing much happened during my night-duty there.
One night, however, there was a lot of singing and dancing.
"What's happening?" I had left my glasses at the base and could just make out some kind of festive goings on.
"It must be a wedding" whispered my comrade playfully aiming his rifle in that direction.
"Are they allowed to be happy?"
Knowing me and and my liberal, humanistic ideas, he realized my cynicism – but I am not sure if he agreed.
I visualized him asking the commander whether Arabs are allowed to be happy, are they allowed to sing and dance?
"Hey! They are doing a skit about us! Doing all the things we do."
I could only see a blur.
"And there is you! They are all laughing about you!"
"Are you sure?" I couldn't see – I tried my prescription sunglasses no avail.
"Yes, yes! There are your bootlaces-undone, your pants over the boots, your rifle upside-down, your webbing obviously half empty, hair uncut and covering your ears and, ha ha, you're bumping into every obstacle – ha ha"

This was very depressing. This was so very depressing. I considered getting up and hitching home.
Fortunately we did not have to lie in wait too many of the days. We were soon switched back to day tasks. This, except for the initial jet lag, was far more relaxing then lying for hours in prickly bush.
I laughed quietly to myself patrolling through Jalazune with my squad (now expanded to six soldiers including our commander, Yair.
After two thousand years of hate based on fables and political interests we were finally justifiably hated. Many of us simply hated back – most jumped onto my "tourist bus".

Our tasks compared to the real wars we had all had attended, were relatively simple.
We had to occupy.
As the Israeli Defense Force was always a bit embarrassed by this term, or it simply never quiet understood how to accomplish it. The term "expressing presence" was thus invented.

We expressed our presence by marching around wearing shiny boots (all except for mine, of course). Shiny boots are a sign of a non-combatant. Scruffy boots are respected in our army. The one exception was on the West Bank, where, we were told, the population had no respect for soldiers who don't polish their boots – a left-over from British occupation or the other umpteen boot-polishing occupiers.)
Our loaded rifles continuously swinging, aiming at possible points of objection.
On the other hand, the Palestinians expressed their presence with the of smell of wood burning stoves, abject third world poverty , a seething population, millions of filthy children, open sewers and very skinny chickens.
As regards degrees of presence - they won.
We had got passing folk to paint over graffiti – no one knew Arabic but obviously against us – well, certainly not Likud election slogans!
Yair my brave officer spent a few hours running after children flying kites made in the colors of the Palestinian flag while we had to remove all Palestinian flags flying around.
Truthfully this was fun.
We were supplied with a long pole and cutter for this purpose.
Once we could not even reach the flag with this. I looked up the alley .there were a minimum of a hundred heads, popping out the doorways looking blankly at us in our struggle.
I took aim at the string with my rubber bullet rifle.
One shot and the flag floated gently down – and all the heads disappeared.

I wondered to myself quietly whether I had created such despondency, that the Intafada was now over –talks had started – and I had received the Nobel Prize for peace.
Yair, probably doing his thing for the cause, got me to carry all the loot, twenty or so flags, which I did over one arm, a Jew in the garment district of New York.
I was at the back to the right of the squad. I felt a little pebble hit my shoulder. I turned around and there was a dirty little girl with scraggy hair walking behind me. She first stuck out her tongue then started doing all kinds of very rude dances, making horrible faces.
She was so sweet.
I didn't know how to respond - so started dancing a rude dance back and stuck out my tongue. We then had a competition of pulling faces.
I searched my pockets for halvah, which I always kept in case of emergencies. Here was an emergency but my pockets were empty. What could I do? I had to give her a little something.
I gave her the flags.
She grabbed them – screeched – and ran off.
I turned around,my squad had disappeared. This put me in a very precarious situation. A very, very precarious situation. I was alone in a hotbed of anti – Israeli, anti – Jewish, anti – Developed world, anti – Slightly overweight soldiers,

Of course, my magazines and grenade pouches were mainly empty. A trick I learned in the various wars – making walking lighter. I walk/ran in a straight a line as I could; figuring that only by doing so could I get out. Not get lost in the camp maze looking for the squad. I did so - removing the rubber bullet attachment and changing the rubber bullets for real ones.
I may be crazy, as many, probably justifiably thought, but not that crazy!

I decided to just sit under a tree, on a hill, next to the camp, and wait for someone to find me. I cocked my rifle. The sound of the bullet entering the chamber increased my anxiety rather than giving a hint of security. I kept spinning around – checking no one sneaking up from behind. The squad would soon come out somewhere.– I was simply taking the bigger picture into account.

"I heard a noise in an old, small, apparently empty house not more than twenty meters from where I sat.

(Gabi who had been looking down and to the front, now raised his head and was looking – not at me – but through me.)

"I stalked stealthily across - there was no door. Someone taking up a position to shoot me. When with others, I generally try to go along with the general consensus of opinion and decision. Here I had to decide. I had to decide without assistance.

"Without aiming, without doing that impossible 'house clearing in urban warfare' dance, never managed anyway, I pointed the end of my rifle around the door and slipping the catch onto automatic. I opened fire.

"Three bursts – just three.

"It was so easy

" Ratatat... Ratatat... Ratatat,"

Three. Just three.

In the Autumn

(I was now praying desperately for a terrorist attack – suicide bomber or something.}

("I had been so scared, Gabi – so scared)

"From the corner of my eye I could now see the platoon commander waving from the bottom of the hill.

(The old lady approaches on a walker, is probably a disguised terrorist, those old hanging breasts – a bomb belt!)

"I waved back.

(She enters a crowded coffee shop and blows herself up!)

"I didn't hear any sounds coming out

(I saw myself trying to save the life of my friend – cursing myself for not concentrating in the first aid classes.)

"so I looked in.

(Too late – he is a goner – he went with my story – Praise the Lord!)

"There was a child – there was a little girl – blood everywhere.

"Her head lying on a pile of bloodied Palestinian flags.

"A bolt of lightening seared its way through my brain.

"My life had ended and another was to replace it.

"'A donkey!' I shouted as I started the run towards him – tripping on the rocks – using my rifle as a balancing pole as best I could.

"I could hear them snigger, little schoolgirls, both the pro and the anti-me camps -

"'That's all you got to do – shoot donkeys?' "

"My hands were quivering.

"My body was quivering.

"I felt the blood drain from my face.

(I began whispering words he couldn't hear through the glass.)

"I was dreaming, I was dreaming, I had to get back to my family. Gabi, I wasn't to take chances. To survive. There was so very few left in the family. I had to survive and replenish it to rebuild the country. Multiply said the bible!

"The smallest remnants had finally returned after being carted off to Babylon. What right had I to upset the miracle? The miracle of return. Three thousand years of history – always facing the Temple. Is our symbol worth less that the symbol of others? Aren't all countries symbols.

"A scratch the desert that will be ours in reality as well.

"These were the primary tasks.

"To multiply!

"These Arabs weren't part of the major calling – they were a mere disturbance to the major calling. An obstacle. I was taught of universal tragedies and of universal solutions.

"They didn't include Arabs or little Arab girls!"

" 'Just like you – idiot – wasting bullets on a donkey! Get to your comrades and start checking papers and things.' "

" 'What do I check,' I asked.

"No one checked the house and things".

(I looked sideways and just made out Gabi walking in what could be best described as "Ape Depression". Bent over forward hands swinging loosely a few inches off the ground – head up and scowling.)

"As the day ended we formed up on the road above the camp and walked three on each – guns at the ready, back to camp.

The sun was setting in the west making long shadows of our figures pointing East over the West Bank rocks and far beyond, far towards the East. The hot Hamsin, maybe the last of the autumn flowed over us. The sounds of our marching boots broke through the absolute stifling silence surrounding us.

Having left the camp of a sudden death, relieved thoughts turning them back to the wife, the lover, the children, the profession or business, the term's university papers...yes, those nasty little pink official papers.

It was then I heard the longest, loudest, saddest wail of an Arab Mother. .

" I heard the loudest, saddest wail – searing its way through my brain – through the back of my neck and into my guts, just below the rib cage – where it has stayed to this day

"Where it stays to this day"

The footsteps turned into the loud snaps of an Arab drum deep in my ears – where it stays to this day

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"You know my feelings about the Brotherhood of Man, Gabi.

Gabi I wish them a state and I wish them prosperity if this is what they want.

I wish not to regard them as cousins, Gabi, but as brothers!

"But there is the bigger picture – we always have to remember the bigger picture not only who we are but the remnants of what was. What had happened.

"The Palestinian issue is another agenda. Important – yes – but of a totally different magnitude.

"I had to return home. Reserve duty – one month – can be forgotten – but I felt and feel that my main duty was the procreation of my people, my family.

"One little Arab girl surely can't change all this? She shouldn't have been there. Her parents are to blame. How can they let out of her house when we were around? I am sure any court would release me. Obviously the risk of losing my life should be a serious criterion.

There was a break in conversation. I had no idea of how he was digesting the words I had thrown at him. I could measure the time of the break – my watch hand being held down by the glass cage. It could have been ten minutes – it could have been thirty.

He stopped in his tracks with such suddenness that I, even with my disabled gait, briefly overtook him. He resumed his former imposing height.

"You bastard!" The "st" in bastard included a spray of spit but all the spit in the world could extinguish the flames spewing out of his mouth.

His face had turned a deep red. If he had maintained his previous stance he would now have definitely resembled an ape.

My vision was to a large degree obstructed, as the spray of spittle covered my glass.

"I have spent virtually my entire life suffering with this little spinning girl. She has dragged me in every direction and made decisions I wouldn't have considered. Almost all decisions result from her presence. Every part of my body and intellect has been stimulated, exercised and stimulated again.

"My eyes, ears, skin, sex, taste all under her command.

"What's left of my brain twisted, turned and twisted again.

"She has pulled me into places I did not wish to be and out of places I shouldn't have been.

"This is life. This is life. Short or long this is life.

"Not once has she mentioned category. What right have you to be categorized? My little girl died as part of humanity. It was humanity that killed her and humanity that has to live with the guilt and humanity we are hopefully correcting!

He lifted his hands to his face. How dare you! How dare you!"

He was talking with incensed verbosity. His face's red, deepened further.

"For fuck sake Gabi! Can't you understand? Just as you have been with that little girl in your head, I have the wail of that mother in my guts. Eating away at my intestines like the cancer-worm, slowly creeping up my guts!

"Constantly farting and grepsing, gasping. Constant the hollow pain.

"Your girl forced you into action and admiration of others.

"My 'Mother-wail' forces bitter bile into my mouth, forces burning liquid shit, uncontrollably, out my ass, forces me so far away from life. Maybe my self-hate could save me from total solitude. Solitude from my family, from my people, from mankind. Maybe I could through all my self-pity inside I would attract some pity from the outside"

"What air do you breathe in that accursed glass cage – the same filthy, stale air you breathed a minute before? What false sense of security do you get in there? One small stone, a pebble and you are finished. You fool – struggling around with your apparent supercilious wisdom."

"You traitor!" I struggled to reply, my face the same degree as white as his was red, "Can't you remember even the history of one generation? What does the death of one little girl compare to the tons of Jewish flesh burnt – the ashes spread over the fields of Europe? Isn't it our absolute duty to bring safety to our category? Doesn't this safety rely on numbers – don't I represent a new fountain of Jewish DNA."

Out of panic and need I continue, trying to blank out any possibility of his words entering my cage.

"Humanity? Humanity? Fuck humanity! We were at the apex of art, science and culture and they kicked us in the ass. They murdered us one by one and by the thousands. We are now surrounding ourselves with walls of steel and brick, built to the sky! No one will eventually dare touch within them. We will eventually listen to Mahler from beginning to end without interruption of some disturbing event. We will eventually write poetry on Daffodils and Water-lilies!"

He heard not a word.

"Little, ridiculous, steps – fooling yourself and us .You really believe that you are being protected for the procreation of our race. That you are infallible. That simple existence is justification for all."

My voice rose – hollow through the cage.

"Maybe through the society we build we may become a 'light unto the gentiles' but first we need to fight, put our morals aside and fight – with soldiers, tough and fearless – like you. If little Arab girls die, as tragic as it is, we term it peripheral damage – the main cause must never be forgotten."

A break – a scathing break, then he continued as if I never existed.

"Now you tell me you killed a little Arab girl. What kind of person are you? Even with my crippled soul, my duty has been fulfilled. My body and mind always stretched to the utmost."

Now he lost his cool – hands flaying in all directions.

"Cant you understand – making love under a palm tree by the sea– drinking beer while listen to jazz is the greatest honor we can bestow on our slaughtered families!

"With no validity whatsoever you remain an empty shell – except for killing of the epitome of innocence, a little child. Empty, empty, empty."

My stomach was churning faster than the first day at school – when the stones came pelting down on me.

I had behaved as taught. I had worked well at the municipality and was always

I saw where we were and where we were walking but my view had become a bit hazy – may have been my breathing on the glass, maybe my farting.

"You fucking idiot – we want to be with the gentiles looking at the same light – no more and no less. Finished with being the light – finished!"

Another break. How typical – throughout my life I never actually ran a conversation – I have always been dragged through someone else's.

"Why in hell's name - Automatic?"

My head could not move so I looked downwards searching for an answer on the pavement – maybe one that wasn't obvious.

I replayed the whole fiasco. I found none but the obvious.

"Three bullets may not have found the target – I fired automatic." I croaked quietly but louder enough for him to hear.

We turned into the top of Sheinkin Street from Balfour just as the Purple Cloud turned in Sheinkin from King George and Allenby at the bottom. As it bellowed towards us and spread over the crowds of coffee drinkers, shoppers, thinkers and non-thinkers alike, dressers and undresses alike, they all stopped and froze into the position they were. It covered us and reached and passed the point on Balfour where we had entered Sheinnkin.

All and everything in sight darkened.

Darkened, still and totally silent

Again we could see the bright flame of yellow through gaps in the purple and blue sky.

After a relatively short time a single, very tired looking angel began circling its way down. Her wings were slightly torn at the edges. She was breathing heavily. Each time she angled I could see, on her back, a very confused looking Observatrator gripping around her chest, from shoulder to shoulder with one hand, fingernail white from the exerted pressure and pointing towards us with the other. The absolute contrast between the two was sharp. The white cleanly dressed and ordered angel and the filthy, smelly, badly dressed and of course, laces untied, Observatrator. The hair of Observatrators unkempt and long as usual, but in this case blown back and stuck into this shape by its filth. The Angel's hair constantly flew into his face. Using his pointing hand to push it out of his eyes, he never exactly saw where he was pointing whenever he did.

I happened to know their origins. Gabi, notwithstanding his life's struggle with the strange and abnormal, was shocked.

As they approached us Gabi – silently broke in half. Just below his rib cage – he broke in half. Out popped Sorrele's daughter – wet from his insides. Wet like a newly born baby. She jumped onto the pavement. Looked around – looked at me – looked at the Angel and Observatrator – looked at me again and looked at Gabi who was slowly closing and returning to the normality he always so craved. She then said quietly the words that possibly changed my life.

"Genuk, genuk, dos binst genuk!"

She climbed onto the Angel, just in front of the Observatrator, and the three of them took off. The Observatrator pointed left while the angel traveled right. The little girl – tears slowly drying on her filthy, blooded face – arms around the angel's neck – stared trustingly straight ahead , holding in her screams as best she could lest she disturb their navigation attempts.

Chapter nine part two

The cloud dissipated as fast as it arrived once the trio had risen out of sight. The Sheinkenists wherever they were, like the children of Hamlin poured into the

on their tables to the cats and dogs. They tumbled out of coffee shops and restaurants.
They all held hands – those who knew and loved and those who were strangers. Some tough young man picked up Gabi and placed him on his shoulders and did a slow spin as if showing him off to all. He smiled and snapped his fingers to the music coming from a hundred stereos a thousand drums and ten thousand mouths. Around him rings and rings of dancers. Young girls doing belly dancing. Boys doing African American break-neck dancing. Immigrants doing kazakskas. Foreign workers were doing dances from Zulu rubber - boots to Romanian_____.
dancing to Indian meditative moves. I hate to mention it, but honesty compels me to mention a bunch of Hari Krishnas – Hari Krishaning in Hebrew! And around all these many more just common o' garden Israelis happily doing the Hora – their right shoes smacking the road just there, their heads bowing down and up to the beat of the music – bull style.
Almost not noticed the music had changed the same computerized electronic music- the universal: **boom boom chak chik boom boom boom tik tak boom boom chak chik boom boom boom tik tak boom boom chak chik boom boom boom tik tak boom boom chak chik boom boom boom tik tak**...
All the dancing changed to jumping from the left to the right leg and then back. All smiles had gone except where one dancer flashed a smile of recognition to another. It was amazing how many smiles Gabi had received.
He was one with them.
He had won acceptance.
He had finally, completely and irreversibly blended in.
He did not know that a warm comfortable place was slowly being prepared for his eternity.
Gabi couldn't comprehend how they all knew of him and his joy – the burden, the pain, the solitude that had finally been relieved.
His last thought was something related to the amazement at modern society. The way the media would focus a spread on the story of one individual for instance. How amazing it was that we had seemed to reach a point where the story of an individual seemed to be known by all even without the media. People just seemed to know everything! How does that happen?

Chapter nine part three

Happy for him yet disappointed, I obviously could not participate in the celebrations.

For one, it was my friend celebrating his newfound freedom while I was still suffocating in the ever-narrowing glass cage.

His torments were seen slowly leaving him. Mine were stuck deep down in my throat, in my guts and up my ass, creating a never ending bilious feeling.

Dancing and other incongruous, frivolous games would certainly have had, to say the least, little benefit.

There was also the fear of being close to people who knew everything about an individual. I had a fear that, if recognized, notwithstanding the glass cage, I would definitely hear again the jeering and the mocking.

I struggled away slowly.

Again alone.

Looking back by turning a few degrees and pulling my eyeballs around with great effort, I could just see every now and again, through the bodies of the young fresh Shenkinists, Gabi's huge body dancing, jumping wildly, arms flaying.

NEXT CHAPTER OR PART

I kept walking; my legs hardly provided with enough room for even a small stride. I passed all those still sitting, drinking coffee of just the right blend at just the right temperature, in just the right shaped mugs. A waft of coffee came into the cage. So much it brought to me.

The old days, the days before today, sitting in a coffee shop in Masaryk Circle for instance.

Pretending to be reading a newspaper, looking surreptitiously over the top at the pretty girls. The soft, cool, soft, blemish-free skin that never could or would touch mine.

Listening desperately for some brilliant barb only to pick up a word hear or there – much like the crystal set I once built as a child.

Enjoying, nevertheless, the atmospherics, the movement and the sensuality of youth.

The sight of a middle-aged man walking with short strides in a glass cage was too much – even for the most avant-garde member or potential member of the Sheinkin society. It seemed a group decision had been made to cope with this apparition – ignore and hum a love byte to the one sitting opposite.

Trying not to seem to separate from those around me – I looked into all those wonderful little shops, pretending that home made soap, home made candles, home made body o, and patent leather Korean shoes really interested me. Maybe they wondered if I was maybe, notwithstanding my disability, searching to purchase my daughter a birthday or graduation gift. I was so scared my cage would smash with the pressure now being exerted from the inside.

I turned my head around slowly, my cage pointing in the same direction and was surprised to discover that, despite my weird outer apparel nobody seemed to be taking any notice of me. Possibly they were more than noticing; maybe those were not love bytes – but comments about me. In this case, they were kind enough, not to allow me to feel this.

Walking slowly, in this way, slowly down Sheinkin, listening to the joyous celebration started by Gabi, I arrived at the corner of Allenby and Nahalat Binyamin, Carmel Market, and King George. The interesting thing was that each of five streets served five segments of Tel Aviv society. Not so long ago, a stranger standing at this junction, could feel he was at the center some kind of caste system with the color of skin, origin and cultural level each arriving at their geographic position in the pressure cooker. Today everything is all jumbled. All our children are attracted to the other segments resulting eventually in beautiful babies, wealth (except of course hi – tech caste which turns out to be a separate offshoot) has been all mixed around. Back towards those sophisticates and my jubilant friend was out of the question. Walking up the Carmel Market and having some fruit tossed at my fragile outer covering, together with _____, was also out of the question. King George was as usual full of lost tourists. I had a special love for lost tourists-always sending them on their way, with precise instructions. Whether I actually knew the way of little consequence – the feeling of mastering navigation was wonderful.

Today of course the thought of having to shout through my casing, showing the way as well as, and maybe having to explain the predicament I found myself in, was a bit too much.

There is an underground, urine smelling, causeway from Sheinkin to Nahalat Binyamin. I considered whether I should go for it – making little jumps from step to step. At the end I hobbled a little up Allenby and crossed at a zebra–crossing neither looking left nor right. This was a long time habit. Now, of course, I could not move my head an inch either way anyway. I made as many restricted steps per minute that I could, I heard the cars screeching to a halt. Then searching down, I carefully manipulated myself onto the opposite sidewalk. Here too I kept myself busy with the pretense that I was within the norms of society. The cage pressing so hard on my face that only one eye able to be used. My right my eyelid was as impossible to close as my left one was to open. My nose, on the large side, was now squashed up on the glass so any life-giving air was breathed at this stage, either through one nostril –or a small portion of my mouth. My shoulders too, were pushed up and my arms still even more tightly to the sides of my body.

Almost as I entered I Nahalat Binyamin realized that I had made serious mistake. The kids here who had been shopping with their mothers tore away from their sweaty clutching and immediately formed a circle around me – laughing, jeering, and dancing around as wild, hungry wolves would around a trapped prey. I tried for an escape continuing my little steps forward, which hopefully, due to the size they become, would not be noticed by the kids – or this movement would have also become a cause for jeering and pushing. There was one little snotty nosed child just below me – the only one that I could see that was not in some form of hyper-active movement, much shorter than the others, thumb in mouth, who slowly crouched and gripped my ankle. On touching the inside of my sock and feeling the warm flesh - let out a massive screech which, even I, within the cage, heard and jolted - ran to his Mom looking over his little shoulder with terrified eyes. Maybe he recognized something of himself in me.

I kept moving forward slowly. The kids slowly drifted off to find a new item to mock or destroy or alternatively back to their Mothers whose one free hand held up as if an extended antenna for their mobile phones, now changed its function to umbilical cord.

I wasn't all that hurt. They were after all maybe justified at this figure in a narrow glass cage. My face was already being squashed on the side so as my nose was flattened, white skinned on the side on the side. But why is it that when one is in a difficult predicament, ones soul seems to totally ignore. Do we have to laugh at the clown? And when a stumbler finds himself in a ditch by the side of the road shouldn't we help him re-establish his balance...maybe lie a little and say that sometimes things like this do happen. Why is that the young astute well dressed and perfumed businessman is pointed to with great jocularity as his briefcase, mobile telephone, mini-tape, electronic diary, and pride go splattering over a pot-holed street?

One eye was still in perfect good use. I could see all the various shops and shopkeepers. This road is quite typical of this part of Central Tel-Aviv in that most of the shops were owned and by one man who had been trained and specialized in one particular task. Now that was back to my hobbling I could see the simplest of signs on top of each door. Hairdresser; table polisher; plumber; dressmaker and so on. Most of the trades were brought here by these men from Europe before or after. I was pleasantly surprised to see an old man sitting behind a scratched, wobbly desk with the word "Author" over his door. Piles of books being written or orders of new books being planned. I did a quick account of the value of the shop as related to the possible income from selling a book on the chance that some kind publisher takes his. It did not integrate yet there must have been some financial logic here as there he was writing, writing, and writing.

Nahalat Binyamin is closed off to cars. There is this constant muffled steps sounding like the hooves of the late king's horses during a funeral of some kind – the muffle greatly accentuated as one comes off the hustle and bustle of Allenby.

In Israel we have veterans, immigrants, contract workers, illegal workers from each part of the world and more. Being a public servant as well as a writer I loved chattering and hearing the story of each one.

A time consuming, yet rewarding occupation.

Often the fading pride of a past and fading officer who had fought in some past and fading war for some past and fading country would love tell of his exploits and gallantry; remembered by none but himself and wearing a few dirty medals on his torn jacket. Such men always told their stories quite expecting me to be familiar with history of his place and time. It is quite conceivable that he had talked to no one for decades until I appeared, asking question after question.

Whenever I hear complaints about Israel and tell of how organized Swiss are, or how beautiful Swedes are, or how big and rich the States is, or how wonderful the theater in Britain is, I always counter that this is the only country in the world you can literally grab, blindly, anyone off the street and listen to a personal story that could last for hours and could cover enough material for ten novels.

I eyed this particular old veteran – identical to the one I had hitch - hiked through the Sinai desert with, on my first vacation after the second cease fire during the 1973 war. I was still jabbering at a massive speed – not allowing him to inch. I have always had this tendency to jabber when fear hits my jabber-bone.

I walked as best I could up to him then shouted with all the breathe I had left.

" Have I met you some place else?"

He smiled.

"Yes my young sergeant – we were in Sinai in seventy three. You talked a lot then. You looked as if you had been to hell and back. I never felt so alive then. How could I ever have forgotten you?!"

"I see you are a porter" , loat his two wheeled trolley.

"Oh no, no" , he laughed , " I do this between wars to keep this in shape " slapping his paunch.

"How much would you take to wheel me down to the beach?"

"Take from you? My sergeant? Nothing. Only please don't jabber so much and allow me to fantasize a little without interruption this time".
I could feel him sliding the two wheeled trolley under my cage and my shoes (thankfully not scratching the leather). He heaved my cage towards him so my head fell on his well developed paunch. He then started heaving me down Nahalat Benyamin passed Hashomer until we got to Raambam turned right and into Shouk Hacarmel – the famous and loved Tel Aviv fruit , vegetable and stolen-stuff market. The whole perilous trip over the cobble stones shook the glass cage and me. My face was pointing out but my one operational eye was kept closed fearing the appearance of possible abuse. I was surprised, as I opened a slit to see how far we had got, to discover that I was not on a trolley. I now was lying in a black, four wheeled, hand-drawn cart with sloping sides and bottom. It smelled of what I had imagined to be the piss in the trenches of World War One as well as dried blood and death.
I could hear the wheels – huge steel ones with bicycle spokes, now bumping over cracks in the road. Bumping over drains and _____ .
The shouts of the hawkers.
" Tomatoes –77 shekels and seventy seven ---
get some now and get to heaven!
Yalla! Yalla! Yalla"
Effluvial vegetables, chickens, fish, olives.
The wheeze of my old man.
The shadows of the office blocks.
The wheeze of my old man.
The howl of someone directing a truck.
The wheeze of my old man.

I have always kept away from this area. Maybe it was a mistake but it was then too much to absorb. Now it seemed I had too little time. Anyway as I was trapped what could I do, but listen, smell, feel. A strange process of fascination started. Many people stared down at me. Some spat the pits of plums, some threw a

wasn't a member of their family and as always, others were working their commercial brains at full speed trying to figure some way to take advantage of this possible opportunity. No one offered help and actually, none was asked for.

It indeed was not a usual sight that was seen – they were not to be blamed. A man in a glass cage being pulled through the shouk but it seems that the business of the day was for more pressing than any curiosity fulfilled. One of the thoughts I had was of one of these housewives stirring her soup. Seven children bouncing around – obese husband wearing a stained vest and reading a few headlines of the morning newspaper saying.

" Oh by the way I saw a man being pulled through the shouk in a wagon – you know – one of those black wagons we saw on television – used then to pick up bodies lying in the streets of the ghetto"

8

Having worked in the Municipality all these years I knew the next thing I should be seeing if I if I looked up would be the Office Blocks. I remember well the raucous that was caused when the plans went through to pull all the old houses down and build another city modern and clean. To build it like a wall preventing any fresh sea breeze reaching the citizens. Should we become a modern city identical to all others – which was a good idea – or remain special – which also was a good idea.
I turned my head as much as possible and again I was surprised. On the edge of the wagon sat a clown. Disregarding me. Playing his accordion.
Even stranger was the make up on his face was instead of the traditional sad clown, one of a smile. The words and the melody were so warm.

"Oh, how we danced on the night we were wed
We vowed our true love, though a word wasn't said
The world was in bloom, there were stars in the skies
Except for the few that were there in your eyes

Dear, as I held you close in my arms
Angels were singing a hymn to your charms
Two hearts gently beating, murmuring low
"Darling, I love you so"

The night seemed to fade into blossoming dawn
The sun shone anew but the dance lingered on
Could we but recall that sweet moment sublime
We'd find that our love is unaltered by time

Darling, I love you so

The night seemed to fade into blossoming dawn
The sun shone anew but the dance lingered on
Could we but recall that sweet moment sublime
We'd find that our love is unaltered by time"

Warm and alone
And trapped.
I could still hear the wheezing old soldier and the wheels turning – now crossing the main sea front Jaffa – Tel Aviv road
And now the few steps down to the sea
And then even heavier breathing as my old soldier pushed the wagon through the sand.

Until he reached the water-edge.

Here, tipping the wagon almost right over, he rolled me out. The sand finding its way through the top of cage onto my head and face. He approached me probably with the intention of giving me a comradely hug and kiss. Fortunately I was, not withstanding the incredible discomfort, my face being scratched more than ever, still protected by the cage. The silence of the sea front allowed me to hear the distancing of the squeaking of the wheels, the jangling medals and, of course, the softening volume of the singing clowns.

It wasn't long before a familiar figure appeared in front of me.

My old friend, the Observatrator. The very same one I had this ongoing relationship with.

"Yoishke Pandrik!!! – I forgot to remove that glass cage. You've had it on far longer than you deserved. Please forgive me enough to possibly forget reporting me to any higher authority"

I heard him disappear running along the wet beachfront occasionally through a low wave. Returning after, what I imagined to be, not such a long time – chisel and mallet at the ready.

I couldn't at this stage open my mouth in order to complain. I just watched as he started chipping and chopping.

He soon got my arms free and I lay there quietly, arms wide open. Each limb as they were liberated strangely so heavy that they hardly move. He had become a sort of friend by now. How could I not forgive him for the pain he was inflicting – he was, after all, doing his best, I imagined.

"This is one of the tasks I am trained to do", he said.

I could feel the chisel slip every now and again, digging deep into my flesh, and every now and again little rivulets of blood flowing down this or that part of my body.

If only he had used some form of pattern – being what he was, I felt him chopping at my feet and then he seemed to suddenly remember my mouth and after that my back. It was as if he was working in a circular fashion although I am sure it was totally arbitrary.

After I was finally freed he carefully picked up all the glass chips but by the time he got to the trash can all the splinters were strewed over the beach creating a glittering pathway of stars disappearing up into the dark over the white tips of the waves.

I had hoped the glass cage could somehow facilitate seeing the underwater life as it pulled me to eternal death and peace.

Now I walked and swam until the current pulled me out and under and waves threw, what was left of me, up and back, onto the beach.

Chapter eight part one

"We haven't been in contact for some time," my Observatrator mentioned as we sat with our backs to the sea looking at the rows of office blocks all lit up in front of us. Hearing the waves behind. The Telavivians all oiskaputsed, walking up and down the promenade as Telavivians tend to do.

"No, but I have thought a lot of our tour of heaven and all you taught me"

The Observatrator blushed, as he tended to do.

"I came actually as a direct messenger from God , I have been trained as a messenger but I really wanted to be with you again. God told me to mention that you have not been using any of his given attributes and that this fact does not and cannot fulfill any requirements in the categorization process."

"Nor does your relationship with your friend have any bearing on your final place of being".

"Why should we even be discussing my final placing at this stage – I am still relatively young. I have read that the average age of departure is getting older and with my style of living surely I should be thinking of even three figures."

"Oh sir! After all you've been through. After all you and seen and been taught isn't it obvious that the longevity in itself isn't of any categorational value. Although within your book you often use all types of words, such as 'patience', 'postponement', these are all words related to time. Time itself is but a human value created for the co-ordination of certain societies on Earth - no more. What will be can be theoretically predicted and believe me, its will not be much more different than what was. The concept of time is but a few millenniums in length after all isn't it?"

"It's not the longevity that troubles the Great Lord, its the fact that you have done nothing with yourself. All the various attributes gto a human being almost totally ignored."

I was absolutely shocked by the relationship God had had with the element of time.

Since the incident there wasn't a second that I didn't plan then value after it had past.

Yes – true enough – I seem to be continually waiting – for no purpose specifically. And loneliness always overwhelmed me.

"Ah, it's the "loneliness" that is so perverse in this situation. If only you could be categorized that hollow feeling would soon dissolve as you approached the "center" as you described so well. The great Lord thus decided that it would be better for all, if we were to end what had not been correctly started. Maybe try again with the same soul later if so needed..How does this sound to you – I am your friend after all.". Only after all these actions were taken and performed to her satisfaction did she agree to be taken by her angel to the children's area of heaven. Although she flew there totally. Tightly held by her huge warm angel, The Clients all stopped their activities. She looked over her angels' shoulders noticing all kinds of wonderful things. She saw God, she was surprised to see the Organizer back.

Being the writer of these events I begged my friend the Observatrator to allow me again to visit heaven. I explained that I had got the general picture but I wished to clear up a few points. After all he had explained on the beach shouldn't I at least have an opportunity to see it again first hand. He had taken me to the area where the Jews were kept ; an area named "Irrational Existence and Transfer of Information."

I saw her arrive and for the last time silently pass all members of her family. She glanced at me – I am sure she recognized me. I was about to shout out, "Its me – Gabi's friend – its me", before taken away to meet her Mom.

" It'll be ok my sweet – soon we will be in Africa – soon and we will see the lions – the tigers and the deer, I promise, my darling. And you will be the most successful doctor and people will be coming to you from all over and I will be looking through the door...."

She said these words over and over. She said these words over and over but they became quieter and quieter as she did.

"Yes Mommy," she was still the little girl she was but she began realizing that some lies are well intended. Some lies are said out of love in a desperate attempt to relieve some pressure – some pain.

At this point – without plan or intention – I had a sudden blurtout that surprised even myself and that was never dared uttered by Clients or any soul in heaven for that matter.

"From the moment of your conception dear girl there was never a chance of you becoming a doctor or seeing all those Animals!"

My friend, the Observatrator, pulled his hair with both hands and then grabbed me. He pulled me as fast as he could away from this scene and although I am sure had the full intention to get me back to Tel Aviv beach, being what he is, misjudged and the Police angels caught us and pulled us straight before God.

There I saw the most amazing sight – the Observatrator that had fetched the girl was reporting to God while standing on his head. He refused to accept that God and his workers had not gone insane but that he, after having traveled so often around the world and universe had totally lost his sense of space and direction. Sheepishly he turned around – saluted stupidly and headed for the doors hoping that as a reward may find elsewhere to either belong or, if not , at least find some menial job - preventing himself volunteering for work above his station.

I, always believing that honesty to be the best policy, explained as best I could the various events that led up to me standing here in front of him. His face grew redder and redder as I told him of the deal I had made with the Observatrators and their attempt to create a power block against him and his wishes!

The audacity of them. Their very souls exist as a result of my need for a "non-categorized category." Cant they once get into their thick souls that there cant be a category called non-category!

He was furious that I had been shown the workings of heaven – enough of the religions existed on Earth. This man just has to mention his experiences and we'll have another religion and all that entails – wars, hate, wasted building projects and so on. While He was ranting and raving my Observatrator made a run for it. The Angel Police – waiting for orders as they are wont to do – plus being a bit over weight as they are wont to be - usually just let things be.

However the sudden movement of the Observatrator seemed to jog Gods thoughts. He turned to me.

"Aren't you the one who was involved with that screaming Jewish girl"

"Only indirectly – my best friend in the Israeli army held as a kind of Bimkom and controlled him to an extent -I was witness to her controlling him. I saw when she was released and heard those cries and screams that interfered with the workings even up here"

" The little girl, oh Mighty Jesus - the little girl " said God looking instinctively at his nice white starched smock for urine stains.

"The Bimkom was meant only as a temporary solution – after she left we set up a special unit. Eventually we came up we came up with an idea to implant the cry in the Jews genes lower the volume but having the cry stretch until eternity plus ten thousand years. We stretched it so the quantity of cry remains the same but over a far longer period. Similar to the ringing in the ear – it shall never go away but at least we can all continue existence. They will begin to enjoy life and love and passion within the bubble of the cry.

" But after we finished everything we couldn't find the girl – I sent down an angel and the Observatrator that had placed her - in order to show the way, he never came back - probably still wondering around lost!"

To cut a long story short it was decided that as the Observatrator had been making decisions on a truth based on what I had been writing and not what actually transpired, my future would be discussed in depth when all tempers had quieted. It soon became apparent that I was finished with life on Earth. I would never be allowed to return even if there was something specific I had to return to . I explained to God I am close to the end of this very book and it may be the only thing of worth I had ever accomplished.

" Precisely – this book must never be read or even seen on earth! Besides I never intended you to do anything of worth!"

"You are basically a good and understanding man, it definitely is not your fault you have found yourself in this predicament"

At this point God and all his Glerks as well as his chief Glerk stood quietly behind the throne so that even by standing on my tip toes could not see their facial expression, their body language, never mind hear their words . God stood on the throne – one leg over the arm rest - as the chief clerk started speaking. "Initially we thought you would be able to work with the Observatrator however as you know they already suffer from discontent: they also threatened an immediate uprising if they saw you even approach their various work areas and doors. You have no category whatsoever. You are anyway far to ordered and conventional to be accepted as a Observatrator a decision has been taken to place you some where between heaven and earth - somewhere - away.

"One could thus assume ," I said, " I have been, in fact, rejected by the rejected – this certainly wont help much help with my self esteem. I have as you can imagine been much berated since birth."

God suddenly span around. I saw for the first time the wrath in his eyes that I had so often read about.

"You killed a little girl"

"That was in my story. It was just a story. I asked that Observatrator not to base my situation on that story. If anybody here had spent a little more time observing they would have seen Gabi coming up here a long time before.

"Oh God, so many us have been destroyed – I have seen your records the last time I was here. If I had killed that little Arab girl surely there should have been a sort of justification. I surely had to get back to my family to my people to my country – at all costs!. I had no designs during that war to survive. Wouldn't that be sufficient cause – in the case that I did kill her. Surely as a Jew – the remnant of remnant I should take no chances. Also lets not forget how I was living in that glass cage – and well nearly perished, if by chance that little girl had been shot"

God seemed older and very much more confused than at meetings I had had before with Him.

"But you turned and saw him dancing, celebrating on Sheinkin. And where is the little girl, the daughter of Sorrele? Where in heavens name is that little girl?"

" That walk we took when we were bored, the walk into the desert, we didn't walk at all – Gabi knew I hated walking – anyway we really wanted to be seen or seen by other soldiers around the area. Gabi "liberated " a jeep and we drove around like adolescents having fun on Friday night (excuse me). We came across the two helicopters as described but on traveling to the three dancing soldiers on the hill the jeep hit a mine. Being me and not holding on properly (I think I was eating a sandwich) was thrown clear.

"The steel windshield, however, cut Gabi on his belt. Cut him into two parts. As I was lying there I could see all the various parts of him slowly oozing out. I recognized most from my days at school. His intestines, liver, lungs , other parts I remembered the shape but have forgotten the names of or their functions. The top half of his bodies landed up on some old barbed wire from some previous war. His eyes were open. I lay there watching – trying to work out if there was any possibility of scooping all his parts together."

Suddenly remembering the little girl, looking at his cloak - checking for a urine stain, shouted in his booming voice,

" Where is that screaming girl? Wasn't she meant to be within your friend Gabi? Didn't we turn her into some kind of Bimkom so we could work up here"

"At that stage" I spoke gently, remembering the fondness he had shown her, "The little Jewish girl came out of his innards, she looked at me for a second or two.

"Genuk, binst genuk,"

she had said while looking around a bit startled, sniveling. Before another word could be said, the most beautiful angel, red hair, skin as white as snow, aquiline nose , green eyes and a slight frown landed then picked up the little girl. Holding her as tight as could be in her arms. The crying again started, even louder, and to this day, I believe, has never stopped. At that stage sir, I hadn't been informed of her story, my Good Lord. I thought that I was hallucinating especially when I saw one of those Observatrators on the back of the angel – his filthy arms around her neck pointing, with nicotine stained fingers and disgusting black nails, showing her where to go. I could see by the look on his face that he was lost before he started! I have been told that the three of them flew around the world many hundred of times. The little girl unable to comprehend what had happened and the Observatrator – well as Observatrators usually are – bewildered

"Often the angel would tire so they would hover over some battle ground – allowing the warm updraft to keep her hovering.

"Most of the world heard had her screams and cries. Sometimes they would put their hands over their ears; sometimes they just ignored the noise as if it was a sound of nature - the wind or the crash of storm clouds."

God thought a while. Putting the balls of his hands over his eyes he rubbed them in a circular fashion. He mumbled something to himself then scratched the back of his head.

"I've never forgotten her or where she came from. After we sent her down we worked constantly desperately trying to find some kind of solution we could all live with. I had a whole bunch of Physangles pulled out of their presumably simple trip to the center of the science area - unlike their life on Earth co-operated with one another. Each Physangel created a brick in the wall of understanding. They had had all kinds of theories they wished to prove to one another and time not anymore being an issue finally listened carefully to each point..

"We almost had to almost forcibly get them to concentrate on the issue at hand. They came out with an ingenuous system!

" They simply lengthened the scream, allowing it to continue on to way past eternity, thus reducing the volume to an acceptable pitch while in heaven. The *quantity* of cry was the same as if she stopped after a million years. The cry was also specifically aimed at her own Jewish people. True – there was an overlapping onto the cries and moans of other peoples but all in all I decided to give it a go. We could at least concentrate on our work for a while and return her to the place she belonged.

"I personally had in mind that if we reached that point I could again reach into the Music Area and fit her in there as an accompaniment to the Scottish Bagpipes. I could then order an African instrument which in its monotonously peaceful and quiet chant and one of those African players –who should so understand so well the cry of a little girl– would blank out what remaining sound there was."

I was obviously very interested in all he was saying. I was yet more interested in what was to be with me. My body still was lying on the Tel Aviv beach, the rising tide lifting my head while waves rocked it from side to side. Most upsetting was seeing that this whole conversation was taking place between God and myself – various members of his staff having returned to other more urgent matters. If any appeal was to be made as to the conclusion of my fate it could only be made when other members of the Operating staff were present. God was indeed great and almighty but it is well know that he seldom decides anything by himself. If God was here on his own; the die had been cast – whichever way. A struggle within me started between the insatiable need to know and the absolute exertion required fighting God and heaven.

Chapter eight part two

The fact he was chatting to me face to face gave me a feeling I remembered only from many, many years before when my Father stroked the back of my neck. Maybe this is the "self-esteem " they keep going on about.

"Why would you wish to go back to your miserable life now that you've seen other opportunities?"

"Even a cockroach wishes to live. When I was a young child I used to drown ants. I remember how they wished to live, how they scrambled on the bath for the very

"They were behaving according to their behavior pattern. A piano has the worth of wood and steel to some merchant or piano collector. (It was well known - Gods love of pianos NOT harps). But until it has been played it has no soul. It has no place in heaven for all our wonderful musicians. It is said that Pianos have souls. The point is they have souls they may be categorized and slowly melt into the other souls to become one. As God I can confirm this as true except, except if its not played. Your ant fulfilled himself as best he could. The piano has to be played!

" We gave you so much. Taste, touch, eyes, intellect – so much – feet, legs to copy deer or horses, The ability to give love – the ability take. What do you do? Make love after the TV weather? Work in a municipal sub- department?"

there was a break, then he almost shouting exclaimed," I am not here to judge you, but to simple categorize you – I cant for the life of me find a category for you, you are thus to be discarded!"

My soul cried. For the first time, since I can't remember when, I felt my eyes filling. The air in my chest release itself, My back bent over. Maybe he'll just let me off with six of the best!

"What you are doing to me," I shouted, " is not humane! I've done everything, everything required to live within a category, a designated category. "

He yawned, stretched his back , grepsed again.

" All those books of law , the interpretations of them by Priests Rabbis Lawyers and interpretations of interpretations, are all there desperately trying to create categories for all - always to protect a new minority that appears as life changes and evolves. All systems of control requires these categories whether they in Darkest Asia or Lightest Europe or up here.. Often minorities are hated and destroyed or just hated for the categorizing degree of another group. Democracy, for instance evolved exactly for the protection of minorities... but all the groups, new and old, all categories and sub - categories are all, all within the system."

He was so bloody sure of everything he said - and I was condemned and didn't care anymore.

I couldn't handle this anymore

" God Shmod", I shouted, "Democracy may be the protection of the minority but humanism is the protection of the exception, the non-categorizable. Can't you understand - humanism is the ability to bend the rules – or to look the other way – or to listen and respond kindly. What about your chief clerk, what about the blues singer, what about the Organizer who could organize successfully? There are so many exceptions - why are you making me an exceptional exception?

Then God in all his wisdom threw out his ace card!

"This is your book. These are all your ideas! If you can create a better heaven - or better still a situation with no heaven at all - do so! If you can try to create a heaven including exceptions - do so!"

"This is true. I have the ability to push the 'select all' button and then 'delete all' I am in fact even more powerful than you!"

"You cant"

"Why do you think so?"

"It wouldn't be this book - but another",

God continued, "Here, in this particular book it's too late – my dear friend"

"We gave your soul a perfect body - well at least a good one – and you didn't use it – its there – down there – empty!"

God greppsed.

My throat choked.

My guts felt they were bursting. I threw my hands over my head trying to stop the spinning.

"Soul, soul, soul – what the hell is a soul". I flung my words at him. I didn't care nor fear Him any more – the case had been heard. He, the judge had passed the sentence. What further harm could He cause me? The firing squad, as if it were, was outside in the courtyard, waiting for me to be dragged out.

"The soul", said God "is the sum-total of your life. The pain and the pleasures you have experienced, the various environs you have lived through, all your experiences, yours loves, your hates. Its eating shrimps with white wine looking into the eyes of your lover..."

God greppsed again.

"And do you know where yours soul is kept? Do you? – It is kept just below your rib cage in the center of your gut!

"Many say the heart – NO – if it was the heart no two souls could meet in an embrace- and anyway the heart is no hidden away behind the ribcage. – that's why it is where it is – that is why when two people really love their souls join as one. When the sum – total of one is enmeshed in the soul of another."

He was, as far as I was concerned, driveling - his sidetrack had become the main freeway – he had already lost interest and was already deeply engaged with the next problem, the one after that and after that

There was a silence – he had obviously given this speech a number of times. I had a sudden revelation that maybe there were a number of Gods – how otherwise could this speech be given to all these soulless Clients!

"How can I have a soul working in the Municipality on clause 76 sub-section 235 of the building code."

"That's your problem." He shot back

"Someone has to do it – or our society would fall into pieces"

"That's your problem."

After a relatively long period of consideration I continued.

"May I go back – at least to attend my own funeral. May I at least witness my own burial and hear the eulogy. They always forget and forgive and give such beautiful eulogies."

"No – I understand there will be very, very few attendees there - if any. And who do you think will attend – maybe a few paid mourners – that's it and if any decided to tell the truth - I am sure you it would be, what you would not wish to hear"

"God – great God – I have secretly been planning my eulogy for years – for as long I can remember – and the fact that there will be no mourners will only enhance the honesty of my eulogy – I have never heard a eulogy as an affront to the dead. A eulogy said by the deceased himself to a funeral empty of mourners cannot be anything but the truest reflection of his life – the "sum total" as you put it – of his life – his soul."

The conversation had ended before it began. There was so much to do. A pained expression passed over His face. His forehead crumpled.

"No"

"I knew your answers before I asked them. Without the Glerks around you dont have the gumption to change my fate! All say you are great but you cant even change the smallest question such as to the fate of one insignificant Client."

God's face turned beet-root red! He could hardly get a word out.

"Look there! Look!" he was pointing a little to the west, I could just make out the Glerks rushing hither and thither rounding up all the building workers they could and disappearing with them into the distance. Building workers could be seen sliding down the walls of various structures and joining the race.

"The internal walls of the structure of the "Political Category" has collapsed and the Clients are taking the opportunity rushing to the center - ignoring the pleadings of the Doorangels. Do you think your case is the only thing of importance around here?"

The one advantage being condemned is that one can say or do anything - free at last!

"And how would you know that?"

"How dare you? How dare you?". He raised his leg off the chair. I stared surreptitiously under his cloak - legs he had but no feet. He sort of just floated about - much like a hovercraft.

"Are you insinuating that God is lying? Do you think I created this whole panic for your benefit? I am God - all powerful Lord and Master of the universe - Why the Hell should I lie and moreover - why should I lie to you – you potz!?"

"I don't trust you at all - it wouldn't be the first time. You always so concerned to keep us Clients calm. Well tell me, dear Sir, how would you know about the political category catastrophe?"

"Rumor everything here works by rumor". God seemed to be enjoying himself playing with my soul, as I had playing with the ants in my bath!

"I have been a very kind man throughout my life. I've always believed in understanding and empathy"

He burst out laughing, "Come here come here, stand with me on the arms of my throne." He could not stop his laughter," look over there – do you see that milieu over there, with that line of Clients spreading around that contstrainer a million times. That's the 'kind' category. Every Client sent there, gives his place to a new Client arriving. No one ever seems to enter or even reach, the door!"

"Over there is the "assertive category" – whoever arrives pushes to the front and in. No one is left outside at all!

"No Sir you have no character and no category here! You never believed in me. It was the belief in me that would have given you the direction. I am the compass. I am the compass and without a compass you are lost!" He then took off to do more creation or whatever.

I tried running after him but stopped after a few strides. I shouted after him. "God! God! Why have you forsaken me!"

But like stories past, fate had been sealed.

Chapter nine part one

The Observatrator who arrived to accompany me was very rude. I stood there thinking what should be taken to make eternity more bearable. To every question, spat flem towards me sometimes hitting, mainly missing. Trying to interpret his anger I began to realize that my existence had actually threatened the security of his God and his Heaven.

It was too hurtful to accept but looking at him closely I definitely recognized some features of Gabi. I was torn between asking if it was he, or refusing such a possibility, continuing on my way – hoping his spitting antics to be as inaccurate as possible.

I slowly realized that in the position I would soon be I would be requiring no stores. Does anyone in heaven ever require stores – I thought not. From just the look on his face I realized that even a cheap second-hand laptop wasn't going to be 'on the cards'. I stripped and folded my clothes and gave them to him. I was to be touched by nothing. I was to be touching nothing. Truth be told – this was a relief, life having been spent with this avoiding unendurable touching. Clothes were, for me, a constant punishment, scraping me as a sailor scrapes the sides of a rusted ship. Sound echoed so loudly in my head that the whisper of a light autumn wind would echo in my head like the double crash of helicopters.

Slowly I began to realize that the hatred was a fear of my existence. Being an Observatrator and forbidden through the various doors, he had arrived suddenly confronting a Client who had had all impossibilities, in retreat.

Where I was to be there were no walls or doors. The longer I remained there the chance of finding a door to a suitable category became less and less probable.

I was simply moving further and further out.

An expanding universe.

The expanding universe?

Whereas in the heaven that was previously described – the categorized and re-categorized Clients slowly drifted through various doors had always the hope of reaching the warmth and comfort of the center.

The process, for me, was reversed.

Whereas in heaven, activities and dramas with beginnings and ends continued, I existed now in total emptiness.

There would be no reprieve. Nothing here would be relevant.

The only judging here is the distance I traveled; further and further out. And the only way of judging is by the overwhelming nausea that increases as the further the retreat.

What was her name? What *was* her bloody name?

Nobody ever told me the name of Sorrele's little girl? I saw her body and face

And then and only then did I recall the little Arab girl.

Were they together now in that corner of heaven – that abhorrent place in heaven made for children? Did the waiting Clients fall silent for her as well, as she entered?

Did her mother come through for that last embrace?

Did she suck her thumb?

I imagined her meeting and playing with Sorrele's daughter?

Did they compare each other's dolls?

Then and only then did I realize that it was NOT the fact that I had no right to enter any door, defining, categorizing myself.

The slaying of one child had overridden all else.

And there was no category for a Jew who has slain a child.

I wasn't even permitted the contemptible position of Observatrator.

I had even been stripped and spat on by one of those.

There was no category for a Jew who killed a child.

If Jew, who kills, has moved even one small step in the direction of the cruelty he suffered, is automatically stripped of all categories. Any other group can be form and request special door but Jews, after the intensity of the cruelty they suffered, have lost the right of any special doors.

He has to accept what's available or accept total, irreversible rejection.

It was then and only then did I realize that it wasn't exactly as God had described that had sent me out here. Morality had been so clearly defined – and I had been trying so hard to comply yet here that I am spat at.

I turned my head around as far as my bones and muscles could stretch. I continued the turn by moving my eyeballs as far as they would go.

There I saw. A million souls. No, a million, million souls, rising, helter-skelter through a twisting purple sheath surrounding a flickering yellow flame, as they rose slowly to the heights of heaven .

I was too far to hear the laughing but I could see them all facing, staring at me. Their mouths, their bodies all shaking, many, in teasing jest, pointing me out as they rose slowly.

I moved further and further out and the rising souls became a flicker in the distance and my solitude irreversible. A tune and some words formed in my brain.

(The reader will now sing the first line of "If I was a Rich man" of Toppel over and over initially without, then with, words – as written. They are to be sung slowly with a relatively long gap between line and line. The reader MUST take into account that I am many billions of miles away from the warm center – away from any form of identity – away from any possibility of categorization.)

Dade dade ~ da da
Dade dade ~ da da

Dade dade ~ da da

Dade dade ~ da da

Autumn is the ~ season

Death attacks all ~ reason

Confusion in the ~ system

Cut the rose's ~ long stem

Put it in ~ the water

Watch your ~ little daughter

Rocking on a ~ wooden chair

Are you here or ~ are you there

Autumn season is the ~ best .

Definitely the ~ very best

Before the winter snows ~ do fall

And angels start their ~ mournful call

For all children to ~ lie so still

Its not called death ~ but called not ill
I am so far ~ and lonely
For my Dad ~ and family
If I said because of my presumed understanding of my predicament I have a certain degree of satisfaction ~ Id be a liar

I need to sing ~ in a choir

Chapter eight part three]

As you and I sang my eyes focused on a tiny dot on the other side. The dot enlarged until by the end of our singing took the form of another soul. A soul not all that different to me. To my surprise, or maybe not, it turned out to be Grandfather.
Grandfather?
Grandfather I had met so many pages back. Except now he was of course,, as myself, naked as myself. I took in his thin legs and slight potbelly –white skin –

his head with discolored skin under that thick wavy black and white hair. I immediately noticed, of course, the crinkles.
And there - the blue tattooed number on his arm.
"Grandfather, my dear Grandfather, we never finished our little chat. It so good to see you here."
"First, for you to tell me for why you wrote about the purple sheath and million, million souls with the looking and the laughing? What is the meaning of this?"

I had been caught.
"I can write what and about whom I wish! If you read my story – I mentioned this at the beginning..."
"...then I have nothing to do here – I must go back. What I thought you are an incorrigible rogue – Shalom – I must go back."
"Listen, Grandfather – I made this up because it sounds wonderful and beautiful, it sounds what I felt and it sounds very intellectual. I also needed some element to tie parts of the story together while still maintaining the feeling of solitude. There was also a deeper reason...something related to universality – but I already forgot..."
"Nonsense! I wish to continue our conversation. Oy vey voi if you write rubbish!"
For sure he wasn't going to return to his position in heaven after traveling so many light infinities
"– I will write what I wish," I whisperingly thought to myself. " This is my book!" and then aloud.
My head almost exploded, "Everybody is telling me what to do and how to spend my death – its not enough how I was told how to live – look where its got me! And anyway, what are you doing here – in solitude, in nowhere with me?"
The story soon came out.
"Once in desperation the Chief Glerk had pulled me to face the Great Lord himself.
"This Client has become a trouble maker. In life he was a good man and always agreed with all. He had this bakery where every type of Jew congregated and he agreed with all. With all. Sincerely. Now we have offered him every category yet he rejects all. The Lord, obviously in a state known as pre-exasperation, turned slowly.
"Is this true? You have rejected all? You have been offered all and accepted none?"
"I wish for nothing but to once more bake bagels with my wife and listen to all the arguments as the Jews wait around our oven. They will once again congregate around my oven as they did so long ago chatting about this and that; what will be and what was and what should have been...
"Listen, Oh Lord, is there no chance in having such a bakery here in heaven?
"I wish to bake the tastiest bagels known,
"I wish I wish to give them away for free,
"I wish to see every new Clients getting a bagel and having all anxiety quelled,
" I wish once more to hear all the arguments for and against, this and that, while the bagels are again baking – the aroma filling all the halls of heaven. I wish them to once again congregate around the oven, debating world events while waiting for their bagels"
"I wish to hear your Clients biting and exclaiming: ' This is heaven'"

"Nu?" I broke the silence, "What is the answer?"
I remained interested in the Lords decisions, not withstanding the enmity I felt towards Him and them.
"I noted the tears as he rejected my proposal. ' I have never met a man as kind as you with so few requests but what you asking are totally unrealistic. Clients being what they are don't eat, or smell and in many cases don't know what bagels are, or of their prescribed affect'
"He said he was beginning to understand my soul well and was permitting anything I wished for"
" Hearing the urgency of his voice, and wishing to finish my case, allowing him to attend to others, I foolishly blurted that I heard you were here and would once more wish to meet with you!
I simply couldn't think fast enough for something else. At that instant all I wished was to release him from the problems he was having with me. If he was one of the family I would have approached things differently but being an outsider speed of release was the first priority. Damn! My slow brain!"

"Truth be told, I didn't fancy all those doors – made me more confused than I was down there. I was offered so many. Each time I went in I felt more uncomfortable – I just tried the next and the next and the next. The Observatrators were amazed at the number of doors I was permitted in. How many categorizations I received! They even offered me a post as Observatrator. I thought to myself that if I had been so unwanted down there that they sprinkled my ashes over that field. They shot all whom I loved. *Could* there be a category that I could belong comfortably?
He caught himself jabbering, took in a deep breath, and then started again about the twisting purple sheathes.
I had to stop him. I began to imagine that he had actually been sent here in order to drive me crazy as part of the Lords revenge.
" Miner Zeider" - my answer, would contain the audacity of overbearing wisdom. I switched to the Yiddish word for Grandfather. An attempt to water down harshness of my observances.
" Miner Zeider - if each individual has this magnetic need to belong, then like a magnet it will search the easiest and closest opposite pole."
I had a sudden thoughtblurt – if he is here and he is what can only be described as good and loved by all, maybe everything is not lost.

"Please Miner Zeider, let me continue. Maybe within my thoughts there is an answer.

If one thinks of one's gregarious instincts obviously originally designed for family and tribe, but now sublimated to nations, races, professions, types and so on there, is a need for what I call a "subjective target". The core around which the group is formed. So we have Doctors from all over talking the language of Doctors. A Tribal Doctor from Zimbabwe has a common language with the Doctor from Harley Street or Mount Sinai, New York. It is the subjective target that is searched out, that we are trained be identified with, from the morning of birth. Often the word "acceptability" is pranced about - meaning just this.
Obviously the most emotive experience would revolve around "subject targets" surrounding oneself.

He was rocking his body forward and back - shokelling, as he had done so many chapters back.
"It was your story and the story of the family that brought me out here. I couldn't see the bigger picture – How do all of you want me to see the bigger picture when Sorrele's daughter lies broken in a pool of gore and forgotten? How can I see the bigger picture when you were…"

He cringed, "Bobemeises!"

"I asked you for nothing but to dress properly and be a mensch"

"Five thousand years of history means nothing!"

"Nothing!"

"Returning to the land of our forefathers means nothing?"

"Nothing!"
Relearning the ancient language of Hebrew – we have five and a half thousand people speaking what was a dead language not so long ago! This means nothing?"
"Nothing! Its all bobbemeisis!"
I was turning red and purple. I needed a breath.
"Why did you come here? Where is my Dad, where my Mom? I want them!"
"They know where you are. They said they would come but a break from you, they needed, for a few million years first."
Seeing my mouth turn down, added, "A million years is not much up here. They asked me to come first, and teach you a little first they said they had had enough of you hucking them a chainik down there for the time being!"
"I am a good man"
"When?"
"Always"
"Never!"
"Why do you say that"
"You have always been unacceptable – that's not good in my opinion."
"I am confused"
"As always – tsutumelt"
"Good and evil are values related to the group you belong to. They are tentacles coming from the group to the individual who wishes to belong and the more he complies the more he is good the more he rejects o is rejected he is bad. The individual cant decide the shape or demands of those tentacles – if he does he doesn't belong to the group – maybe another but not that one. The point is that the tentacles come out and not in."

"You don't sound like the Grandfather I met on the killing field"

"My accent?"

"Well yes that too! What happened to the Yiddish accent I so loved"

He laughed gently.
"I am like a chameleon. I change myself according to my background – which is why I am so loved. That's how I belong to almost all groups and all groups invite me to join. This is all those years have taught me.

"You on the other hand remain obstinately yourself. Obsessively yourself. "

"Wait a second – are you Jewish?"
"Of course I'm Jewish. My philosophy is Jewish. My DNA is Jewish. My history is Jewish. My nose is Jewish. No one has to know it though do they? Oh, and a few of my great –grand children they also forgot. But we will all now survive. All that is, except you. We all belong to all kinds of acceptable groups – all that is, except you!"

Chapter nine part one
That's the end of my book. I hope you enjoyed reading it as I did writing it.
- Whose writing it? Who are you? What right do you have expressing authorship? I am trying to express my feeling, my frustrations, my ideas. Who are you to dare come along and end the book? This is not your book to end! I have even started ending it and anyway I am not even sure that any major point has yet been made.
- If you turn back to chapter_____ I declared that I can, as a chief author, create anything I wish and this I did. You are nothing but a figment of my imagination. I am the writer and you simply a figment of my imagination.

• What rubbish – if I was a "figment" – why am I written in the first person – answer me that if you can!
• Oh ho! If you really want to know – you are the most despicable, self-centred, obnoxious, arrogant, atrocious character I could dream up. I felt it unfair to put you onto some poor, unwitting third person. With all the humanism left in me, I took you upon myself. I am the writer and you a gourmisht! Please, just sit quietly where I put you and stop hucking me a chainik. Dr Shwartsman will obviously be reading this book, and if he catches me conversing with my figment – it may have dire consequences for me!
Its time now, to end the book.
I turned from my figment and with all the breathe in my lungs bellowed, "ORGANISER BEGIN".

Chapter nine Part two

The same Organizer we had met before, rushed up – still sweating profusely – bowed to you and all the thousands of other readers - turned and raised what seemed to be a conductor's baton.
As he did this hundreds of Animals of every type mentioned in my book entered from both sides – running amok – not interested in the least in the goings on – but continuing their living reactions to each other as if survival was still a priority. Knowing that this struggle was over, the readers enjoyed the movements, the speed, and the idiosyncrasy of each specie. Zebras, Elephants, Deer, ((all the Animals in the book))
As they left, the attention of the viewers were drawn to the left where a whole bunch of varied Observatrators, under the direction of the Chief Glerk, began pushing and pulling that music Constrainture slowly until it faced my figment, myself, as well you the reader and all the thousands of other readers.
What really created an exciting effect was that exactly behind it were all these souls slowly arriving quietly, rising within the iridescent twisting purple sheath.
The Organizer turned baton still up, to some Glerks who had arrived with the Constrainture. In a loud stage mumble got them to line up the Observatrators in a relatively acceptable formation in order to keep them lined up and, of course, to stop them from stupidly bowing in all directions, out of time and context.
Below the Constrainture were a few hundred hazans holding Shofars to their mouths and a few hundred Swiss mountaineers holding their fifteen foot long alpenhorns, stretching way over other layers of musicians. Kneeling in front of them hundreds upon hundreds of French-horners. In fact there were horns from every part of the world and from every age. I thought it interesting that the ancient Egyptian horn players always stood sideways, one foot forward – never letting on their frontal views. There were Tibetan prayer - horners.
Suddenly the Rabbis sounded a "ROOO TO TO TOOOOO" and received in return a "BAAAAAAAAAAAA" from every horn in every scale available, from the long deep alphorns to the high pitched bugles.

The Glerks who had been arriving in ones and twos now started taking up positions – running a hither and a thither. The Constrainture started opening as on page____ and there again were our familiar musicians from chapter____. Some wearing the same smiles on they had worn before. Others, already believing that playing on occasions to be their eternal fate, wore that supercilious expression geniuses
tend to wear, sure that they were above all other categories.
What was most strange was that many of them were wearing, instead of there heavenly clothes simple modern everyday clothes – jeans, t-shirts and so on.
The Organizer dropped his baton.
Nothing happened.
He rushed up to a group of musicians, arriving together with a group of Glerks. There was a serious squabble between a fairly large contingent of players and the Organizer that seemed to go on for ever. Eventually, red faced, he came to me.
"I'm terribly sorry sir, but we intended starting this show with some Arabic music, symbolizing something or other, but they refuse to play – or rather they refuse to play in your book!"

"What is wrong with my book? What is so bad about my book?"
"It's not the book, Sir, it's you. You are Israeli and they refuse to accept your existence"
"Well – you go right back and tell them I too hardly accept my existence – in fact I am quite surprised by it – but this is not the subject of this particular book, tell them – maybe the next one…"
He sprinted back, baton still raised, but they had already closed their instruments and turned their backs making sure they would never even get a slightest glimpse of me.
Aha – so who is a figment now?
You are – just shut up – you definitely don't exist – I don't even use inverted commas with you!
Neither I with you!
The entire musical category, not in the least interested in political trivialities were getting aggravated – not because time lost, of course, but they loved their calling and wished to get started.
Just at that point the gentle sound of a piano drifted down. It was so beautiful. The notes flowed as from a bubbling tropical spring. Not one note misplaced. It was difficult to imagine that individual human fingers were actually selecting the keys. Everybody searched the Constrainture until all focused on a shelf near the very center and saw an old man swaying to and fro gently at his piano. Not withstanding that all was possible here, my entire body froze, as I think all the others did, recognizing Arthur Rubinstein!
The Organizer again returned and whispered to me that it had been planned to play in my honor at the very end – in gratitude for writing the book. Now he decided to bring it forward it order to smooth any feathers ruffled by the Arabs. How he knew, my love of seventeenth century Ladino love songs, I will never know. Love songs sung at the height of the Inquisition.
Then accompanied by Arthur, spotlighted where the blues singer had been in chapter _____, was a dark skinned girl, dressed in old, torn seventeenth century Spanish clothes; her hair, black as coal, sweeping over her frown and breasts.

Notches buenas, notches klaras

Ay ke notchcs la mi madre ke no son d'arreyevar.

- Tres ermanikas eran eyas todas tres en un andar;
Salto las mas tchikita d'eyas i reliumbro komo el kristal.

- Durmach, durmach mis donzeyas i si durmich rekodrad:
Manyana vos azech vyejas i pedrech la mosedad.
- Nights so beautiful, nights so clear,
nights to fall in love.
Oh such nights, dear mother, such unbearable nights.

- Three sisters lie as one.
The youngest one shining like crystal.

- Sleep, sleep, my maids, and remember
Tomorrow you will be old and youth will be lost.

-
She ended, bowed and disappeared out of the light – which was then extinguished.

Oh the chain – the golden chain.
It will never ever be broken.'
I swear it, will never be broken.

"TOOOO TO TO TO TO TO TO", again the shofars and then again the answer: BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA, all the horns that ever existed on Earth and more.
The whole category, including those amazing choirs, began as if it was to be heard at the end of Heaven.

Seventy-six trombones led the big parade
With a hundred and ten cornets close at hand.
They were followed by rows and rows of the finest virtuos
Sos, the cream of ev'ry famous band.

After a lot of effort the Organizer managed to quiet them down a bit. Nations being what they are even their musicians tend to compete. Here they were competing in volume. They were in fact intended to be simply a backdrop to the final bow of the various participants.
In walked a thousand seventh day Adventists. They all were wearing their haughty smiles. About each group of about ten were carrying a long plank they placed on top of pre-prepared trestles. In time to the music and with the help of a few Glerks they set up the plank, jumped up and started their dance. Backwards and forwards – kicking the left and right legs high alternately. The spectators and the readers went wild with joy. Clapping, shouting words of praise and whistling. The women dances smiles grew wider and their eyes sparkled.
Seventy-six trombones caught the morning sun
With a hundred and ten cornets right behind

Springing up like weeds
There were horns of ev 'ry shape and kind.

As they were performing members of my family trouped in. They lined up. _____ (etc). The children – those vilde haiers ran up and down as uncontrollable as usual. And of course the prams. Without even the slightest pause in the music the drums rolled, the dancers jumped off the plank and they all bowed in perfect unison, including the vilde haiers.

Thundering, thundering all along the way.
Double bell euphoniums and big bassoons,
Each bassoon having it 's big, fat say!

The Glerks and Observatrators clapped, cheered and whistled.
Some members turned around and bowed.
Some pulled the "babies" out the prams – they were simply plastic dolls,
the ones that cry automatically. I think they go for about one hundred and fifty shekels
at Toy r Us. Everybody burst into a laughter as they withdrew to the back.
On came my Grandfathers brother – arms spread out above his head, with a huge smile behind his beard – which seemed to be getting unstuck!.
And then appeared my Grandfather and his wife – holding hands high in the air as they took their bows over and over, mouthing "thank you, thank you". The cheering was overwhelming both from the others and from you, the readers. They moved back. He turned left while she turned right causing her to trip. The laughter was amazing. He too laughed and raised his thumb then giving a last little mischievous bow, he backed away.

There were more than a thousand reeds
Springing up like weeds
There were horns of ev 'ry shape and kind.

There were copper bottom tympani in horse platoons
Thundering, thundering all along the way.
Double bell euphoniums and big bassoons,
Each bassoon having it 's big, fat say!

On strided an assertive group of men, some disheveled some smart – all in the same general style. They were all wearing dark suits and were all carrying brief cases. Some had young men running after carrying reams of documents and some carrying black robes. Never in the book had they previously appeared.
• Who the in heavens name are they?
•Please keep to a whisper, I really don't want non-readers to hear our conversation. They are Loryers. I had written them often into the book and deleted or saved them often. Each time I "deleted" them, or "saved" them, they complained bitterly. They claimed they could create some sort of order while I always explained that their order wasn't the order I was needed or wanted..
•If I had known, if I had known maybe they could have found some escape hatch

This is the last time I warn you – quiet! My fingers are itching over the delete button – and delete you I will. If I am threatened in any way. There is no evidence on your behalf anyway for one and secondly my readers would immediately claim I copied the idea from Kafka.
The ovation slowly died down.
Starting from somewhere the readers began repeating over and over – "
Author! Author! Author..."
Earlier in my life I had built a theory that art need not have a reader or listener, or spectator. I built a theory that art could stand on its own as art. Can have its own soul. Soon I realized it was simply my lifetime fear of rejection manifesting itself once again. It was important that my words were read. But
"Author...author...author!"
My smile spread from ear to ear as I stood up.
I felt two hands grabbing my neck and shoulders and pulling me down hard.
That bloody figment of my imagination again!
As I fell down on my back, I reached through his legs, grabbed his genitals and pulled as hard as I could. He fell turned and punched me on the side of my face and a totally uncalled for fight commenced, legs and arms flaying in all directions, began.
I had unfortunately reached a stage where if I deleted him my book would be destroyed. On the other hand he knew full well, that his existance was only as a result of the book. A true negative symbiosis had developed between us.
This was to have been the apex of my productive life.
Violence was not a province within the realm of my behavior.
I prepared a speech apologizing for all this untoward reaction, as I bit deep into his left ear. He was ruining my first chance at acceptance.
The organizer swung his baton and the band increased to full volume, blanking out our cries of distress.
When the dust settled the only apologies, were in fact, only to each other.

Seventy-six trombones caught the morning sun
With a hundred and ten cornets right behind
There were fifty mounted cannon in the battery
Thundering, thundering louder than before
Clarinets of ev'ry size
And trumpeters who'd improvise
A full octave higher than the score!

The Loryers stood in a row, gave a little bow and disappeared as quickly as they had arrived, realizing that being "saved as" was far more secure than stirring up my wrath.
The chief Glerk walked on – bowed to all – and walked off. His interest in the spectators and readers was minimal. His sole interest had and still was the smooth flow of all under his control. He did receive applause – more of appreciation of his organizational ability than of acting talent.
A man then appeared. He was dressed in tight fitting jeans with a thick belt, a pink, star decorated vest, one earring and very carefully combed and shaped hairstyle. It was Gabi. He shielded his eyes from the strong spotlight searching all. On seeing me, he bowed facing me and then suddenly pulled the rainbow gay

There were fifty mounted cannon in the battery
Thundering, thundering louder than before
Clarinets of ev'ry size
And trumpeters who'd improvise
A full octave higher than the score!

Oh Gabi! You idiot. If this is a demonstration of your sexual traits – it is of little interest to me. If this is a request to take up your cause in the next book – I doubt it will be written. Can you not understand that this book incorporates your cause as well? As it does all causes.
The response to his appearance was as expected. All the characters were drawn and remained frozen in their character throughout my book. Gabi had changed and grown and changed again. He had been marvelous and the readers and the cast expressed their admiration for his flexibility and creativity
The areas at the back were filling – to the left and right. Not only more Glerks and Observatrators but also many of the "Clients" were seen to arrive. Many of the many building crews began arriving – covered in mud and other material – dripping off as they walked assertively as they tend to do - Contractors, architects, designers, and laborers of all shapes and sizes. Realizing they were not going to be called for a separate bow found a place to stand and applauded with the others.
All the lights suddenly dimmed, the music quieted even further then stopped leaving only Arthur's piano playing the same tune. The audience too quieted, waiting with anticipation.
The spotlight switched on, there was a loud roll of drums the music came on from the whole constrainer.
Seemingly from nowhere appeared three figures. God, Sorrele and Sorrele's little daughter held their hands, swinging merrily between them. Behind them a bunch of angels, holding each other around the waist and dancing in time to the music, kicking their legs high and flapping their wings! They suddenly stopped and looking far to the right started calling and making "come forth" gestures. The little Arab girl appeared. Initially looking down and sucking her thumb. Sorreles daughter grabbed her hand – and they became a chain of four.
The entire audience – the players and all you readers – cheered as if redemption had come. Standing, clapping, whistling, stamping. A few readers shouted "Encore" (which initially I took as an insult – thinking it meant they wanted me to re-write the entire book). Three angels rush to them bringing bunches of flowers. God and Sorrele raised their free hands and bowed over and over and over. They were indeed stunning in this book – they had indeed played their parts well. And the two little girls wrenched even the hardest heart.
There were fifty mounted cannon in the battery
Thundering, thundering louder than before
Clarinets of ev'ry size

And trumpeters who'd improvise
A full octave higher than the score

The Organizer suddenly turned around to face the readers – did a seventeenth century bow - whirling his hands – turned back to the musical category – which

The players could now be seen climbing down, floor after floor until reaching the bottom, the whole constrainer rocking perilously as they did it – then after straightening their clothes disappeared into the darkness.

All that now, was left of the music episode was one beautiful, Sax player, sitting on the lowest level of the Constrainture. She was totally absorbed in trying to turn the march into blues. She continued playing ignoring where she was – and no one felt like stopping her.

She had long black hair streaming over her frown and breasts. She had been blowing around – searching for the soul. She had spent her entire life looking for the soul and knew that somewhere in the depth of jazz, it was sure to be found.

What she called the "ultimate soul", what she called "ultimate feeling, ultimate love. Deciding that in this march no soul would be found - she put the sax in its case – stood up – straightened her tight jeans covering her long legs– and walked away

And that was that.

- Why did you stop believing in God
- A totally irrelevant question, possibly what is relevant is why did God stop believing in me?
- What do you mean by that?
- I have a few ideas but lets leave it up to the readers
- Where were the Germans and all those other cruel people in the finale?
- Good you finally realize that I am the writer and not you! I decided to leave them out. I have that right. Author's license or something. I couldn't see myself bringing them on and having to hear applause.
- So they didn't bow
- No.
- But I didn't bow either.
- I know. Anyway, it's a bit late, the readers have all gone except for the one.
- Are you equating me with the Germans and all those horrible people?
- So bow already.

And as he bows I would really like to express my gratitude to you, dear reader, for reading to the very end.
Maybe looking for that one sentence which would make sense of my story.
Maybe there is about as much sense in my book as there is in life.
Thank you anyway.
And a special thanks to Dr Schwartzman. The medication has really began to help. Things are slowing down and clarification is setting in.
Maybe its now time – you got started on –
Humanity.

It is a well known fact that Jews have weak bladders. Driving anywhere in Israel you will see men standing by their cars or a little away looking in the sky and peeing. I have been told that notwithstanding the extra toilets put in El Al planes a long queue immediately forms after take off requiring the pilot to pull back on his joy-stick to keep some kind of stability.

The new shopping maul built in what I call "Internationalist Capitalist Conspiracy" style – which means the passages are so complicated that being lost trying to get out, one may bump into a shop that has the cuckoo-clock that twenty years you have been looking for and find yourself reaching for the wallet and credit card.

Next to this social-anthropological monstrosity exists the City Hall. A gap of eight meters separates the two. A gap that over the years has become a urinal for young Israelis coming home from the pubs, old Israeli with prostate and bladder problems and for the general Israeli population.

Placed carefully in the urinal are some stairs, which lead both to municipality and the platform overlooking a huge – what I call – totalitarian square. If one stands back one notices people using these stairs at about three times the regular speed. Could it be that the architect had taken the stench of urine into account, speeding up pedestrian traffic? Behind this is Ibn Gvirol Avenue . Ibn gvirol_____ . Coffee shops , Food shops of all kinds, dirty electric appliance stores that refuse to sell out, old, refusing to die VW Beatles, fancy shmancy Mercedes waiting to kill, motorbikes whizzing bye, holding the youth of an aging man in place, motor scooters, busses, taxis. All belching different degrees of smoke. All making sounds from whoosh to grunch. And above all the noise the shouts of young kids recognizing friends from school – from the army.

This is where our Prime Minister was assassinated.

Our prime minister was assassinated in the Tel Aviv urinal.

American/other – fancy assassination

It was so appropriate for Rabin to be assas he wished to go. Like the way he lived. Part of us little folk down here. Carrying sinated where he was. It was a sort of Genetian sort of death. It was the way that little boy refugee on his shoulders. As far from a private opera box as you could get. I cant imagine him being in a motor-cade. Can we forget how embarrassed he looked getting the Nobel Prize or how he sang with the "hevra" at the square before his death.

Lets walk across the square. As I said before it was designed as a "Totalitarian" square. Five huge avenues allowing the entrance to the square standing like shabby policemen. A huge stage way above for the "Politburo" to appear protected by a moat camouflaged by a fountain.

Two main revolutionary acts took place. Look to your left. There is a memorial to the holocaust. The remembrance constantly there whatever is going on – whether a celebration or demonstration – always they're at the back corner. The subconscious. With the kids have a wonderful ball climbing to the very, very top to see whatever was to be seen. It has been said that Tolbonkin the sculptor stole the idea from some South American memorial – no matter – it smashes through the totalitarian with its angles and points. On entering the statue for the first time a shock hits ones backbone. As the tragedy of Rabin's assassination is accentuated by that gap - here the stripes of the camp uniforms, the broken Star of David and the water of renewal is accentuated by the two homeless rolling up their broken blankets. If an essential element of a fascist society is uniform thought - here it can never happen. Not here. Quickly one notices that the residents around the square have ignored every regulation and law, doing as they wish with the apartments own.

Verandas cancelled, enlarging the inner space, all types of sun blinds of all types of colors. Air-conditioning units installed dripping water on the pedestrians below. The pedestrians stopping to eat, or sip coffee or buy last years model radios at bargain prices in a conglomerate of shops almost thrown together as if in a middle eastern souk. All so wonderful – total lack of obedience to the wishes of the architect. And even more wonderful – all this overt revolt taking place in front of the eyes of the municipal inspectors – the municipality being the fourth side of the square. I am convinced that the inspectors involved were co-conspirators in the slow but sure destruction of the planned ordered square.

According to tradition fifty day a years the winds blow from east to west – from the desert to wards the sea. Temperatures soar as do _____. According to tradition one can actually kill one of your wives during these days – the heat being exonerating circumstances. If the heat wasnt enough the wind would bring in the desert dust - slowly covering everything that wasnt sealed - furniture - ones new car and the ____ of ones lungs. It was during one of these days that this memorial ceremony was taking place.

On the right, facing the little crowd from the Ibn Gvirol boulevard, the the "Heart of the City" mall built land of what was on the most proletariat zoos in

the world. The area had been the epitome of egalitarian Israel as she was conceived. I always imagined in those times all the Animals standing to attention on the first of May. In place of this we have now a fancy shmancy mall – selling wares from East of West – and out-pricing the wares in the East and West. There seems to be a competition among the wives in the area as to whom can spend more of their husbands money. This mall was set up for this exact reason.

On the left of the little crowd – the municipality, Designed by _____ , obviously a venerated socialist and totalitarian. A huge matchbox on the perimeter of Rabin Square – filled to the brim with offices and security guards showing obscure directions to the various offices. The kafkaesque result created to keep the poor citizen as far from the targeted clerk – eating the _____ cake and drinking tea out of a long – never – ending glass.

If this wasnt enough for the expression of the designer love of proletariat control he designed a huge stage, big enough to carry two _____ . The one running the country and the second team as it were. A moat in front of this (the depth still not yet displaying very serious thoughts of leader protection – the shallowness of which gave me to think that the designer thought that the children of the European Jews were going to get even shorter with time instead of taller!)

And then this huge treeless square. Useless for anything for just about anything but political rallies and book fares and wild dancing on various occasions.

How often have I heard the crowds shouting approval and signs held proudly high as leaders in the encrypted words of politicians tell their hysterical followers that they wish to have their children fight and die for an unclear cause, take their hard earned money away, remove any hope of a peaceful, quiet old age! Ah! The art of politics.

The other three sides of the square are buildings shops on the ground floor and three floors of living above that. The walls , the plaster, all the building relating the thirties, when the Jews were, like mice being hunted by an ugly cat, scattered all over the world, a relatively large number dreaming that they could have their own country. Sometimes when I slit my eyes, these buildings seemed to built out of mud – much like children's houses on the beach. They were just amazed they had a house, no attempt made to make them appear to last for ever – as the appearance of houses in Hampstead or Scarsdale. That need certainly wasn't a priority – maybe such an attitude of permanence, at that time in history, would have been jeered at.

Here in the square the houses were designed as soldiers standing shoulder to shoulder - further increasing the image of totalitarianism.

The architect had been obviously impressed with the order of the Eastern countries or maybe even the power of the Fascist countries. Maybe he decided that only by mimicking them we can to achieve the power and order it seemed necessary for survival in this insane world.

One of the most hilarious thing that I have discovered is that the Jews have probably the most coagulated group prejudices levied against them - whereas in truth they are the most individualistic people in the world. Even in the wars I attended each soldier seemed to regard himself as the pin king of any possibility of victory - the others were there just to help, just to back him up! We came from a hundred and fifty countries. In short - no one was to tell any one how to live! Very soon every building law was broken. Verandas cancelled and a all types of glass used as a finish. Soon airc conditioners were all hanging, precariously over the pavements and marquees of the various shops below._____ _____ All this done directly in front of those building inspectors drinking tea in the municipality.

Cross over _____, walk up _____ and life changes. A memorial to Mr Maseryk . A small park with a small pond and dogs pulling the masters or mistresses. A row of coffee shops - Europe. On the corner _____ - gay friendly - ham and cheese sandwiches - all types of young couples chatting away about the news - from the most intimate to the goings on in the outer bounds of space. On the days of memorial places of entertainment were to be closed but there was always a debate whether coffee shops could be described as a place of entertainment. It is the way of life of Tel Avivians and these young people all knew victims of war if they werent such themselves. Wasnt this the finest way of remembering - living - isn't this what the victims had died for? On this day everybody splits their brains in two half for the conversation and whatever and the other silent for the too often violence that has surrounded them from birth.

Instead of walking up King George cut across to Hen. Hen the initials of Haim Nahman Bialik, the bard of Hebrew literature, and the only person with two roads in Tel Aviv, appears. What a difference! One block up from the square and another world! ____ trees, bicycle paths, old people sitting of benches, children on bikes and city installed playthings. Art everywhere - visiting Japanese poetry hanging from the trees. Even the busses here seem of the quiet suburban variety rather that the one belching around the square, although its the very same bus.

Here too the buildings were hurriedly constructed for the harried Jewish rats of Europe. Here, however, they seemed to have decided to play some kind of intellectual game. They said that not only are our lives temporary but the whole world is temporary so lets make the most of it here". Although still mainly of Bauhaus design, the pillars are slightly thicker, the plaster repainted or renovated and, as was the original architectural idea, little well kept gardens grow in the front. Here the Jews have picked themselves off the dust and just kept on walking. Walking up, up Hen to the Culture Palace hall, home of the Israeli Philharmonic and the Habima Theater complex. Both so entwined in modern Jewish history. Here the Jews walk up and flashing a V towards Europe shows Europe that not only is it possible to live with that continent but maybe live even better without it. The two building surround an old _____tree and fountain saying a hundred things. If one goes through this area and passes the Helena Rubenstein Art Gallery one passed yet another boulevard - Ben Zvi - coming straight up from the Mediterranean as if prepared, waiting for the next influx from Europe.

Entering Rothschild Boulevard there is an immediate feeling of subdued grandeur - the houses, again mainly renovated here combining the age gone with the age that's arrived. Often an office block modern glass or stainless steel behind a beautifully reconstructed building of the eclectic school. The whole boulevard has been peppered with statues stimulating the intellect to some degree or other. For instance about three hundred meters down from the culture centers there is a sculpture not noticed by many. A concrete house - totally buried! Maybe art can stand justifiably without spectators. And if that is the case maybe all this writing maybe can be simply stored away for ever. Maybe even buried somewhere. What a relief! No need to search out some publisher after all. No chance of negative critiques. No chance of rejection notices. Rothschild Boulevard is beautiful. The Municipality in many cases allowed the building of high office ultra modern office building in return for the restoration of the old eclectic styled buildings accentuating the beauty of the latter. Particularly interesting is the way rings of types of buildings, from the grand wealth to the "Running Rat" exist; an architectural diary of Modern Jewish history. Turning left through _____ street the tour arrives at Sheinkin. Amazing Sheinkin. Mr. Sheinkin was one of the fifty-two winners of plots of land outside a Jaffa to create the seeds of the City which became Tel Aviv. Mr. Sheinkin put forward the concept of a city with no commercialism! No shops! Poor Mr. Sheinkin spinning in his grave. Sheinkin Street today is the most commercial street probably in the middle-east. Selling mainly to the young there are clothes shops galore, music shops, computer shops, sex shops, coffee shops, eateries and an ultra - orthodox synagogue. Its Carnaby Street of the fifties repeated here for the twenty-first century. The population, a special mix that could not possibly exist anywhere else in the world but here.

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